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SCHUMANN–HEINK

THE LAST OF THE TITANS

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MME. SCHUMANN-HEINK

SCHUMANN-HEINK

THE LAST OF THE TITANS

BY

MARY LAWTON

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TO

F. W. BIGELOW, ESQ.

WITH APPRECIATION OF HIS

UNFAILING COURTESY AND FRIENDSHIP

PART I

Schumann-Heink

THE LAST OF THE TITANS

I

I AM a soldier's daughter.

I was born, you know, the child of an Austrian army officer. My father was a lieutenant at that time. My mother was raised (and I, too, as is usual in the family of Austrian officers) in an Italian convent. She was most highly educated, my mother, and the education she then had no longer exists. Why, she spoke beautifully Italian, French, German, Dutch and even Latin—and had the most wonderful contralto voice you can imagine. You see, she was raised in Italy, and in Italy they all sing. They sing everywhere (all those operatic arias) in the streets as they go. It is a funny thing, but every Italian has a voice and sings naturally, and my mother was one of those.

Mother married my father in Italy. In this time a great part of Italy was ours, Austrian. My father was the finest kind of a man—a perfect gentleman, but—well—I must admit it, a real old rough-neck soldier just the same! A good, good man he was—but a rough-neck! God bless him! He got at the first some

little education, then studied later by himself. He ran away from home when he was fifteen, in 1848, the time of the Revolution. He volunteered and from then on followed a military career—worked up from a private to an officer. His father before him had been a military man and had eleven sons, and when they were only six years old they were all put in the military academy to make soldiers of them. So, like the others, my father started when he was six and ran away when he was fifteen. But in some way he got a really good education, later on being able to pass his examinations into the cavalry, and he was until the end a cavalry officer. Eventually he passed the examination to be a Major—one of the most exacting tests. He, too, had to speak all the languages of the different states.

I was born on the 15th of June, 1861, in Lieben, Prague. My mother's name was Charlotte Goldman; my father's name was Hans—Hans Roessler.

When I was three years old, I already sang. I sang what my mother sang. I never was in a theater until I was fourteen, but I acted just the same. I'd put my mother's apron around me and start to act and sing—singing all the different arias and dancing—always dancing. But from three years on, I sang. Then my father was transferred to Verona.

Among my first memories is Verona. We lived all together with the soldiers in the officers' quarters in the barracks, and as I hadn't any playmates, I spent most of my time in the stalls with the horses, playing right under their heels, but of course none of them hurt me, for animals rarely hurt children. I always had such a love for animals, even then.

We came away from Italy in 1866. I was the only child in the family at that time. We came back to Austria because war broke out between Italy and Austria, so Mother and I were sent back to Prague, and there I saw my grandmother for the first time. She was so happy to see my mother and me! She was from Hungary, my grandmother, and her name was Leah Kohn. She was the sweetest, loveliest little thing you can imagine. I recall just how she looked. She was very small and very graceful and very gay. She died when she was only fifty-two, and my mother told me she had not one white hair even then.

Now, I was one of those children that noticed everything—"smart," you say in America. I remember soon after we arrived, I looked at my grandmother and said, "Oh, Grandmother, how is it that they call you *Grossmutter* (grandmother) when you are so little—so tiny? Because she was not tall, and I thought *gross* (grand) meant tall, so I said to her, "How is

SCHUMANN-HEINK'S MOTHER AND FATHER

it you are so small, when they all call you *Gross-mutter!*" (You see, she was not much bigger than I was then.)

How she looked at me, so—when I said that! And she laughed and said, feeling the bumps all round my head with her little old hands: "Isn't she clever to think of that? She has a brain, this child." Then she took me up in her arms and looked deep in my eyes, and said to Mother: "And now I tell you something more. This child has a genius—she will be an actress or a singer—something great. You will see. The world will yet speak of this child of yours."

"What?" said my mother. "The child of a poor army officer? How do you know?"

And Grandmother answered, "Well, I don't know *how* I know, but I feel sure—there is something in this little head—something in this child that the world will recognize."

When I heard that, I was "tickled to death," as you say here, and right away I began to dance, and said, "Oh, shall I dance for you the Czardas, Grandmother?"

"What! And can *you* dance the Czardas—that wonderful dance?" (The Czardas, you know, is the national Hungarian dance.)

"Oh, *Ja, Ja!* I can dance the Czardas."

SCHUMANN-HEINK AND HER MOTHER

"But," said my grandmother, "you have no music, my child!"

"Oh, that is nothing," I told her. "I can whistle it!" And so I began to whistle, and I whistled and danced the Czardas from beginning to end. Well, Grandmother was simply delighted. She clapped her hands, and kept time to my whistling and said to my mother again:

"You see, you see? What I tell you! This child will be famous all over the world some day. I know it! I am never mistaken."

So all this brought me very close to my grandmother. Children, you know, understand instinctively, and I felt some bond between us even then. She meant a great deal to me, my little grandmother. I adored her. She was so gay and so good to me. She always took my part and had the idea to the very end that the future would bring something wonderful. Of course, I loved my mother dearly, too, and she was awfully good to me, but she was always so full of worry and work, poor Mother—there was so little money, as the pay of my father in the army was very small. I can never remember the time in those days when I was not hungry.

When the war was over, my father was transferred again and we went to Podgorzj, near Krakow. Mother

then put me in St. Andreas Convent, not as a boarder (we couldn't afford that) but as a day scholar. I had to walk to school and every morning must get up at six o'clock to be at the school at eight. My mother gave me a big bottle of black coffee and a piece of

THE ROPE-MAKER'S HOUSE WHERE SCHUMANN-HEINK LIVED WHEN A LITTLE GIRL

dry, black bread—butter was unheard of! That was all she could give me.

It was very hard times then. We had no servant—only a soldier, a private, who helped do the rough work in the house. And then, poor Mother! another baby always coming! In the meantime I had had one

sister and a little brother—so there were many mouths to feed, and Mother had to turn this way and that to make things go. For instance, all we could afford to eat at that time was soup, as Mother knew it would nourish us—and how she scrimped and saved to get it! She bought one and a half pounds of meat and two vegetables, then boiled the meat and from that took the grease and saved every bit in a little dish, and that was all the butter we ever had in those days. Everything had to count in our household—even the fat on the soup. She saved everything, poor Mother, and how she slaved for her children! Think of it! There she was, a woman so fine, so sensitive, so highly educated, but facing always hard work and bitter poverty! Every one who met her in later years—I mean the wives and daughters of the army officials—always appreciated her. And how often I think of it now in my days of plenty, how she struggled for us and how carefully we were brought up. We, too, had our special little routine education, like all army officers' children—for it is required that they be put in proper boarding schools and able to meet at any time the King, the Queen, the highest officials of the Court. We were taught to know etiquette, how to behave properly in any circumstance—and it was my mother who saw to all this.

So I went to school in the convent at Krakow. At ten o'clock came the first break in the day. I'd eat my dry bread and drink the black coffee—then at twelve o'clock we could go out.

The Sisters were Polish, so of course hated the Austrians and had no interest to keep the children in or protect them from the streets. I was only eleven years old then and delighted to run the streets—which I did. I didn't fear anything—and perhaps it was all well and good, because it was the beginning of my independence, as you will see.

Well, one fine day I wandered into the market place, and there I found a wonderful circus (wonderful to me, anyway) with all the people crowding about, and the circus people, clowns, riders, animals and everything so strange—so marvellous! They were just having the mid-day meal when I came along. Oh, how it smelled, so good! And I was so hungry—I was always hungry, you know, and everything excited me so—the people, the horses, the smell of that good food all fixed with garlic and all the things I loved (and I love to this day garlic, I tell you), and I so starving.

"*Ach!*" I thought to myself, "what must I do! What *must* I do to get some of that good food?"

I thought, if I could only have something to eat,

why, I would do anything for it. So I asked them, *please, please,* could they give me something to eat—and I would work for it—I'd do anything to get it!

Of course, they were astonished, and roared at me with laughter and said:

"*Si, si!* if you want to work, little one, clean the monkey cages first, then you can eat!"

I suppose they didn't think I'd really do it—they were just joking—but I did it, I tell you, as quick as a wink. And what a meal they gave me! I was stuffed like a Strassbourg goose! And they began right away to like me.

But I didn't tell them who I was or anything. I didn't say I was an army officer's daughter. I just said I was going to school near there. They were Italians, these circus people, big, soft-hearted Italians, and of course, they started to have such a love for me and I for them, that I stopped going back to school sometimes—in fact, very often. Then little by little they let me do other things, and said if I wanted to help in the circus I could do that too—they'd let me ride the horses and so on. I could already do this, because we always lived with the soldiers in the officers' quarters. In that period the families of the Austrian officers lived in the barracks—as I told you—it was not like the "high-falutin"

thing of today, so naturally I knew how to ride a horse.

"But," they said, "you don't need to jump through the big hoops yet, little one—that's too dangerous. You just ride."

You see, they were really careful of me.

Now I didn't say anything at home, because I knew my father had a loose hand, and what would happen if he caught me—a thrashing! So I went to school every morning and at twelve o'clock disappeared to my circus. And it was such a bad school, anyway. They didn't even report my absences. No! They asked me why I was away so often, and I always made some excuse (I was well able to lie—like all good children); said we had six or eight children at home (when we had only three) and I must help Mother, etc. Well, to confess is to be excused—so I hope I may now be excused for all those good lies.

But the fun couldn't go on forever, and I was finally caught by the commanding Officer of my father's regiment. He went to the circus and discovered me there. He didn't say anything; he just looked at me. I decided quick I'd better go home, so I ran as fast as I could, but at home everything was peaceful—there hadn't been time yet for the officer to tell my father. But the next afternoon, *ach!* Father was there

SCHUMANN-HEINK WHEN A CHILD

waiting! That never happened before. He never came home that early. So I knew trouble was brewing—that he knew about the circus.

"Ernestine," he called. "Ernestine!"

That was bad, because no "Tini" this time. He always called me "Tini"—but "Ernestine!" *Ach,* God help me! That meant a thrashing, and a good one!

"Ernestine," he roared, "did you go every day to your school?"

"Yes, yes, Father."

"Then where have you been yesterday afternoon?"

Well, you know, Grandmother had said I had a brain—and I used it then, I can tell you. I knew the officer had seen me, so I told my father the truth. I said:

"I was in the circus."

"In the *circus?* And how come *you* in the circus? What were you doing in the circus? Were you dressed like one of those circus girls? How so? *Explanation, Ernestine!!*"

Well, there I was—caught!

So then I confessed everything. I said:

"Father, I had to go, I was so hungry! And they fed me!"

Hungry! Poor Father and Mother! You should have seen their faces—how they looked when I said

that! And my father turned to Mother—but poor Mother! she knew nothing about it. It was not her fault. The school was to blame. So Father (after giving me my good thrashing) went to the school and made a terrible row; he was not a rough-neck for nothing! Anyway, thank God, we left there in a few weeks, and I was removed from temptation.

Of course, I hated to give up my beloved circus and the good food, for I loved those people, and they loved me, too—and the animals, even the monkeys. There was only one monkey that was mean to me when I cleaned his cage, and he only scratched my nose.

Well, after the circus episode we were transferred to Hungary for a few months and then back again to Prague. There Mother put me in the Ursuline Convent, and these Sisters were of the finest—wonderful women. It was there, studying the Mass, that Mother Bernardine—she is long since dead now—first discovered my voice. Then she sent for my mother and said to her:

"I know it will sound very peculiar to you that I, now shut forever from the world, and never going out of this convent, or seeing anything of life except through this little door (they looked out through a latticed window, you know), that I tell you this

thing: that this little child of yours is one of the most gifted—and blessed with a great voice. God love her!"

My mother was overcome with surprise. "Why, I don't understand," she said. "How can that be? Tini can sing, yes—but such a child! We never thought of such a thing! But, although she is a good girl," said my mother, "I can not always understand her. We say at home she has the 'devil' in her—but still I could not get along without her help. If the baby's sick, she takes it in her arms, and walks back and forth, up and down, and sings—all night, if need be, to the sick baby! She does everything on earth for her poor mother—but in spite of that, there is something in her that we call the 'devil' or 'gipsy'—something you can not control."

But Mother Bernardine only smiled and shook her head, and my mother went on:

"And then, we have no money—nothing! What can we do for her?"

But Mother Bernardine said: "Wait—wait a few years. But I would ask you not to neglect this child, because she will be a great actress or singer. Yes, I think she will be a great singer, for the voice is beautiful! Mother Angeline is trying now to teach her the tenor part in the Mass, but you must come to the

church and listen for yourself, for this child of yours has the most wonderful contralto voice you ever heard."

Mother said: "That is all right and well, and I will come, but what can I do with these few *gulden* that my husband gets—no fortune, friends, or influence—nothing? How can we do anything?"

But Mother Bernardine replied again: "It will come. It will surely come! Where God has given such a talent, there will always be a way."

My mother, of course, spoke to Father about it.

"What? What?" he shouted. "A singer—an actress—a *bad* woman? Why, look at all these women going about half-naked on the stage and—doing this and that" [imitating them]. "My child an actress? Never!" said he, scolding and making a terrible rumpus.

"But, Hans," said my mother, trying to quiet him, "that is not always the way. Oh, no! There are famous singers that are good—there is Adelina Patti, for instance. She is not going naked on the stage—and look how the whole world is at her feet!"

But Father only grumbled. "Adelina Patti! And do you expect our Tini to be an Adelina Patti? Nonsense! And from where comes the money to do all these fine things—from where do you get the money?"

Of course, Mother couldn't answer that argument, but she believed in her heart what Mother Bernardine had said.

Well, anyhow, I did study the Mass. I was absolutely unmusical then. I knew nothing of musical notes—it was by ear that I sang. I couldn't read music then.

And now, this is something I regret as long as I live: I forget the name of the lady who first helped me! She had been a great prima donna in Paris, had left the stage, and married a rich man in Prague. This lady was at the Mass and heard my singing. She hurried back to the convent after Mass, to the little door, and asked who was the girl with the contralto voice singing there.

Mother Bernardine came right away and said, "Why, she is a very poor child from an Austrian officer's family, and we are greatly interested in her."

"Well," this lady said, "I must see her at once, because I never heard such a voice—in all my long experience, I never heard such a voice as that!"

So Mother Bernardine arranged our meeting. My mother came, of course, and it was settled that I could take some lessons at once, which I did. But it was only for a few weeks.

I remember well the misery of this time—not even

a piano to practice on! And then came a neighbor with the idea to help me. She worked on those Bohemian gloves that were so fashionable then and sold all over the world. She stitched the backs of the gloves, and for each glove got one penny, but this included the silk, the needles, and the frame to work on. It was quickly done, so I thought, "Now I'll try it too." So I began, and when I came from school each day, sat until night stitching, and made in one day about 25 cents American money. Well, 25 cents was a lot! And I was proud like a peacock! But it only lasted a short time, for one day comes Father with bad news. We were to be transferred again—to Graz this time. A few weeks after, we had to pack up and go. It was a blow. Convent, singing lessons, hopes—all gone!

Father tried hard to get me in the Czech Conservatory—a free scholarship—but they refused; it was only for Czechs. Hope gone again, and I, of course, desperate! And to pile up the misery, the day before we started, Mother gave birth to my sister Jenny, and the very next day we had to go to Graz—second-class, of course. Think of it!

We all got there somehow, but Mother became critically ill. And there I was with brother Karl and two sisters and no one to help. I knew nothing about young babies. I was frantic! I didn't know what to

do, and Mother so ill. I gave the new baby water and sugar, and as that didn't stop its crying, I thought I must do something *more!* We all drank coffee, so I gave the poor little baby coffee! Fortunately a neighbor arrived just in time and saved the child—but—can you believe it?—my sister, when she grew up, although she had the most beautiful skin (a little bit yellow perhaps, but she was really a beauty) to her dying day will think I ruined her complexion, giving her coffee when she was just born!

Well, after that, Mother got well, thank God! And then began the same things all over again.

At this time an officer in my father's regiment had a daughter who had been an opera singer. She had retired from the opera and was then settled down in Graz, giving singing lessons. Marietta von Leclair was her name. Mother heard about her and went at once to tell her of our misery and of all that had happened to me.

Then Marietta was greatly interested and said: "Well, why don't you bring your child and let me hear her voice? I will see what I can do."

So Mother took me there at once.

Marietta heard my voice and tried me out with scales, and she was delighted. "My child," she cried,

MARIETTA VON LECLAIR, FIRST SINGING TEACHER OF SCHUMANN-HEINK

"all I know I will teach you, and I now prophesy you will be a great singer. You will be one of the first contraltos in the world. *Ach,* what a voice!"

Well, she gave me lessons twice a week. I was still very unmusical—I mean, I couldn't read the notes or keep the time.

Marietta said: "Now, I will have to do something about this. The child must take piano lessons, too. That can not be neglected. Yes, she must study music. She must be a first-rate musician."

At that time I still went to school, for I was only thirteen, and must remain until I was fourteen, so what to do to manage? And at home I must also help Mother, too.

"Never mind the children," said Marietta when I told her all this. "You have to learn to play anyway. You *must* have a piano and study at once."

So she started making the lines of the scale and teaching me music from the beginning to the end. All she knew—bless her!

And, can you believe it? We actually got a piano, such as it was, and we paid only one dollar for it. It was one of those old-fashioned kind—long like this room—of course, not so many octaves as now. It was an awful old rattletrap, and God knows when it had been tuned. So what to do! I had never tuned a

piano—didn't know it could be tuned. But when the strings began to break and crack, and the little hammers got loose (which they frequently did) I had to do something! Father had a big lump of sealing wax, so I got that and began my surgery. First I bound the broken things together with string, and then put all around that thick sealing wax. Sometimes they came out too short, sometimes too long—I wasn't a very good surgeon. But that didn't bother me at all. I practiced just the same. That old piano was a sight! How I wish I could see it now! Wilhelm Kienzl will remember about it. He is a famous composer, and he saw that old piano. He said then there wasn't another in the whole world like it.

So I began playing songs—oh, anything to practice—and to count the time—tap, tap, tap, tap—which Marietta told me was very important. But you know how it was, with the children all in the next room, and the baby hollering—so I used to bring the baby to the piano, and rocked the cradle with one foot and beat time with the other! And that's the way I studied the piano. No wonder I didn't turn out a Paderewski! Anyway, I learned to play my own accompaniments, after a fashion. Of course, I used the wrong fingers—I didn't know or care anything about that. It didn't matter to me what fingers I used. And

SCHUMANN-HEINK WITH HER BROTHER AND TWO SISTERS

it's a good thing I did learn to play my songs, because it kept me from starving to death later on, when I could sing at dinners and so on, and play for myself.

It was in Graz, after I had two years' singing lessons, that I went first to the opera. My father didn't like me to go alone—he was always very particular—so he said,

"All right, you can go, but I will send some one to take care of you—Ernestine."

Naturally I was very much excited at that, but *who* do you think the "some one" was? Well, it was our old private—the soldier who did the housework for Mother! He was the one who had the honor of taking me to my first opera. Of course, I had to go with him, and we must have been a funny sight, for he wore his spurs, and they went clack—clack—clack—right into the theater. It made all the people look at me and laugh.

That is how I heard my first opera, "*Il Trovatore*," with Marianna Brandt, one of the greatest contralto singers in the world. How she sang! And how she acted! This gave me a new ambition.

I still knew really very little in a musical way. I was just beginning, and then came a new person into my life, a musician, Rosbaud by name. She dressed like a man, smoked cigars, and was the talk of the

town, of course. But she started in seriously to give me piano lessons and help me on my way. When I played accompaniments, she would say,

"That sounds well enough, but *why* don't you use the proper finger?" (I always took the wrong one!)

Well, to make a long story short, she taught me a little more—carried on what the other had begun.

I had studied singing three years, when Marie Wilt —the famous soprano, one of the greatest that ever lived—came to Graz. She was a wonder! One day she sang coloratura parts like the *Queen* in "The Magic Flute," and the next, *Valentine,* in "*Les Huguenots.*" She was bad-tempered—a big woman, fat and disagreeable as could be, but what a voice! Nearest to her voice was Nordica. Dear Nordica! but more of her later on.

About this time I got a chance to sing the alto part in the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven with Marie Wilt. But even then I didn't know the notes, for I remember Wilt said to my teacher,

"Why, she doesn't know it!"

And Marietta replied: "Oh, never mind that—I can teach it to her by ear. She is intelligent and very musical. I know she will be very good for this part. You can depend upon it."

So this was my first public singing, with Marie Wilt. She sang the soprano and I the alto part. It was a great day for me when I sang with this wonderful opera singer. Marie Wilt looked splendid and had a beautiful dress on, too. I was a homely little thing, famous even then for my homeliness, and I had no nice clothes, and only old shoes made in the barracks by the soldiers! So I must have been a funny sight beside the great Wilt. When I sang that time, I had on only a black dress made from one of Mother's, but I did have beautiful hair anyway, and took great pains fixing it, and I stuck a red rose in it, too—extra—for the occasion. Also, most important, I got about six dollars for that singing.

The first thing, I gave two dollars to my mother, kept some for myself, and the rest I gave to my bird, Nazi. He had such a little house—cage, you call it—to live in, and that always made me feel badly, so I went to a second-hand store and bought a nice, big cage for him. Much later, when I went home from Dresden, Nazi was still alive, but not singing. And it was a grateful thing that he opened his mouth wide as soon as I came into the room and almost sang his head off! He remembered me, you see. So it was a good thing for the canary bird, too, that I sang in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

SCHUMANN-HEINK AT SEVENTEEN

I suppose I should have used some of the money for decent shoes, but I bought instead the first white curtains we ever had—second-hand, of course, but still white curtains—and so one of my dreams was fulfilled. You see, we had very little furniture—not even real beds. I remember the mattresses. They were only big sacks—the kind soldiers use—stuffed with straw. But I had such a way to make them that they were smooth like the finest beds. We had only rough military blankets for sheets. Then for furniture we had boxes made like a long sofa. Mother could use them for packing when we moved from place to place. And these had on top the sacks with straw, like the beds, only sewed through, so the stuffing didn't move. Then it was covered with cretonne and tacked on to the boxes and made to look like a real couch. The boxes were specially made; we always packed the stuff in them when we made a move. This was our furniture—and a cradle. Always the cradle! So, you see, the second-hand white curtains were a great event in our household.

I can not remember the time, in early years, when the pennies didn't have to be counted, and we had sometimes as little food as we had furniture.

As you know, Father was in the barracks, and every officer had a piece of land allotted him. The pay of

the soldiers and officers was so small that land was a godsend, and we worked every inch of it. We planted potatoes, turnips, cabbage, onions, etc., and a certain salad called *raddicci,* an Italian vegetable. In the summer the leaves are eaten for salad. We had this always for supper—a big bowl of salad was our evening meal at this time. That was all, unless there were cucumbers by a bit of good luck, then they were served only to Father and Mother, as they were a great luxury. Olive oil was out of the question, but we had plenty of vinegar—we got a barrel for a penny. But for oil we had only linseed oil, you call it here. That was cheap, and a big bottle cost only 5 *kreutzer.* And it didn't taste any too well, I recollect. A piece of bread and this salad was our supper always, except at the first of the month, when Mother had a little money on hand. Then we had a feast! She'd rub a little lard and flour together and make a kind of gravy into which she would put some spinach. Then she'd take a big piece of bread, rub it on both sides with good garlic, and spread on the spinach gravy, and would say, "Now, children, see, I give you a fine supper tonight."

And, oh, how we always counted the days to the first of the month!

Poor Mother, how she managed I don't know. Of

course, we always owed the grocery some money. At the first of every month we would pay as much as we could, but there was always something owing. Just before my sister was born—the one I fed with black coffee—Mother was feeling so sick and had such an appetite for—what do you think?—just a piece of cheese! She said to me:

"Oh, Tini, I would so like a piece of Swiss cheese. How I wish I could have it now!"

"Well, I will go and get it," I said.

"But my child, we have no money," she answered. "Swiss cheese is very expensive."

"Oh, never mind that," I said. "I'll get it for you."

So I went to the big fat grocery woman. She was sitting in front of her shop with all the neighbors around her, chattering. But I ran up to her and said,

"Oh, please, will you give me a piece of Swiss cheese?" putting on the sweetest face I could.

"*Swiss* cheese! *Swiss* cheese! How can that be done? Have you the money?"

"*Ach!* no, I haven't," I said.

"Well, then," she screamed, "you can't have it, that's all! Be off!"

"But," I said, "I *must* have some Swiss cheese. My mother is sick and wants it right away."

And then that old fatty just opened her mouth wide

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS A YOUNG WOMAN

and roared. "Oh, who ever heard of a *sick* person wanting cheese! That's nonsense!"

I began to cry and said: "Oh, but my mother *is* sick. She's going to have another baby, and she wants that Swiss cheese now."

Of course, that wicked old woman knew what I meant then, but she didn't relent, just kept shaking her head. "No, no, you can not have it."

And then I had a bright thought. I knew she loved to see me dance, so I said:

"Oh, if you will give me the cheese for my mother, I will dance for you the Czardas. I will sing it and dance it all for you, but first, *please,* my cheese. Mother is waiting."

"Oh, ho!" she grumbled. "I know you, you little devil. You'll get the cheese, and you won't come back! You'll have some excuse—your father, or something!"

"No, no," I said. "I'll come back, I promise you."

Well, my promises weren't much good at this time, but anyway she took a chance, because she loved the Czardas so, and gave me a piece of Swiss cheese, wrapped it in a little paper, and I ran home with it tight in my hand, and said,

"Here it is, Mother, and that old fatty won't put it on the grocery bill, for I'm going back to sing and dance for her the Czardas!"

Of course, poor Mother was delighted, and said: "Tini, you are a rascal—but you surely have a brain. Thank God for that!" So she kissed me and said, "Run quick now, before your father comes home."

And I said, "What! Will he scold me?"

"Never mind," she said. "Go quick—quick."

So I ran back to that old fatty, and there she sat waiting, with all the neighbors crowding about. So I sang and danced in fine style, and at the end she gave me an apple as a reward.

It was in Graz, when I began to study singing, that I want to tell you about now—a word in memory of the people who were so kind and fed me in the days when I was always hungry.

There lived in Graz then a Fräulein Erich, the daughter of Colonel von Erich. I passed their house every day to go to my singing lessons. They had a big house and lived in the finest part of town. I ran always at the last minute for my lessons, because there was so much work at home. One day, as I was hurrying along, my songs in my arms—very important looking, of course—the Colonel's wife was sitting in the window working. She happened to look up, and I noticed that she followed me with her eyes, so the next day I greeted her—kissed my hand to her

in grand style—which turned out afterward a good thing for me. Every day, when I ran by, I made some kind of greeting. So after a while she beckoned me to come in.

Of course, I was tickled to death at that, for as you know I was always hungry, and I scented food in the air. I was like a dog—I could smell it a mile away!

You know, in Austria, every one in the afternoon drinks coffee and has rolls and cakes to eat. Well, it smelled so good, that coffee, and the first day I went in I just couldn't help it, for right away I said,

"Oh, you must make wonderful coffee here—it smells so good!"

That, of course, was pretty fresh of me, but they all laughed and said,

"And would you like to have some of our good coffee?"

"I should say so," I answered.

"And who are you?" Frau Erich inquired.

Well, I told her, I was Tini Roessler; that I went twice a week to my singing lessons with Marietta von Leclair. Oh, I told her the whole story of my life —all for a cup of coffee!—and they were all very interested at once. That was the beginning of our friendship.

It was a wonderful room they took me into, with pictures of all their ancestors hanging on the walls and everything so beautiful. One of the daughters, Louisa, took a great fancy to me and an interest in my singing. So twice a week, after my lessons, it was arranged that I stop on my way home. The coffee was put in the stove to keep hot, and the rolls, too. The old Colonel, the father, was happy to have me come in, for it brought youth to that lonely house. He would talk and talk to me and ask all kinds of questions.

"And what have you studied today?" he would ask, and I answered him—with my mouth full of bread and butter, of course. First, I began with one roll and one cup of coffee, then I had two rolls, then four, and then, *Ach,* came sandwiches and cake, too! Yes, I must say I ate "to beat the band!" During the four years I studied with Marietta, I always stopped for afternoon coffee on my way home. The father and mother died years after, but Louisa kept the friendship with me until she died. I always called her "Tante Louisa." I was her idol, and she followed my career always with love and sympathy. It was a wonderful friendship for me. A little garden spot in my life—even to this day it lives.

And now I must tell you of a wonderful thing that

happened later, when the great opera singer, Materna, heard my voice. This, too, was in Graz. Wilhelm Kienzl was a famous composer of that time, and it was his beloved mother, Frau Nina Kienzl—whom I always called "Tante Nina Kienzl"—who took such a great interest in me. She was a remarkable woman. She held a sort of salon at that time, and had celebrities from everywhere around her—playwrights, singers, sculptors, poets, philosophers. She always had the deepest interest in me, and I was often invited to her house. Of course, I had no nice clothes, so I kept in the background and just listened. But sometimes I sang, and it was there that the great Materna heard me, and LeBatt, the tenor, too. You see, Tante Nina Kienzl was the most elegant and highly educated person you can imagine, and my experience in her house was my first entrance to anything like society. It was most brilliant—wonderful! She took care of me with such affection. She had no daughter of her own, but she had a great kindness for all children. My poverty, I know, touched her heart, and she always tried to help me. It was another big step in my career, when Materna heard me sing. Materna was then one of the most famous German prima donnas. She sang first in light opera and then went into grand opera. She was very, very dark, but with a grand,

imposing figure—and a great voice and personality—one of the most wonderful singers of her time.

LeBatt, the tenor, came with Materna from the Imperial Opera in Vienna. And it was there in Graz that Tante Nina Kienzl had Materna hear my voice.

"You will be surprised," she said to Materna, "you will be surprised, I tell you, when you hear this voice. I know how this child is struggling, and I want you to hear and like her, too."

So I sang for Materna. She listened quietly and said: "Why, yes, it is beautiful—a really beautiful voice, but she is much too young for opera. [I was only fifteen.] What can you do with a child like this? It's no use. She's impossible. Short, homely, undernourished, poverty-stricken, no appearance—nothing—Oh, no, No! Never!"

And so it was. I was homely. I made a poor appearance and had nothing then to say for myself. I was bashful—I always was—although I suppose I'd have hard work to make any one believe it now!

So, in spite of Tante Nina Kienzl, Materna was not interested in me at all.

But LeBatt, the tenor, was much kinder. He said, "I will speak for her—I will speak for this child to our Director." And then he asked me, "Do you think

you can come to Vienna to sing for our Director?"

Of course, I said, "Yes," although I didn't have a penny for the journey. I thought and thought—and then came a bright idea. At that time one of Tante Nina Kienzl's friends, Field Marshal Benedikt, one of our greatest Austrian heroes, was in pension at Graz, Graz being the city of pensioners, you know. So I went to Tante Nina Kienzl and said:

"I beg of you to do me a favor. You can introduce me to Field Marshal Benedikt [he was very rich, through his wife], and as the child of an Austrian officer I could perhaps get money for the journey to Vienna."

So we were invited for dinner, and I will never forget that occasion as long as I live. Mother was there, of course, and Tante Nina Kienzl, and my teacher, Marietta von Leclair, very excited.

Well, I sang, and the outcome of it all was, he gave me fifty *gulden*—God love him!—and that is how I first went to Vienna.

Yes, I went to Vienna—to the Director—and sang. I sang "*Ah, Mon Fils*," and the Drinking Song from "Lucrezia Borgia"—the "*Brindisi*," they generally called it—which made me famous in the United States long years after—though at that time I didn't

know anything about the United States; didn't know even that there was such a place!

Well, I had a good success, but that wasn't enough. The Director (Zauner was his name) listened to me patiently, and then turned to LeBatt, and said, shrugging his shoulders:

"Well, what you want? What's all the fuss? Look at her! *Mein Gott!* With such a face—and such poverty—nothing? What do you want? What do you expect? *Gott in Himmel!*"

And then to me: "No, no, my dear child," waving his hands. "Go home, quick, and ask your kind friends who helped you to come to Vienna to buy you instead a sewing machine, and learn to be a good dressmaker maybe, or something like that—but a singer—an *opera* singer! *Ach,* no! Never—never in this world!"

So home I went, heartbroken!

And Father, when he heard the news, flew into a temper. "Well," he said, "I thought so—I told you so! That settles it. Now you go to a school and learn to be a teacher. That at least is a *decent* profession, and I don't want to hear anything more, ever again, about theaters or actresses or opera singers—nothing like that! You be a teacher!"

Poor Mother, of course, was heart-sick, too; she

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felt with me. But my teacher, Marietta von Leclair was simply furious! She said to my father:

"*Ach!* You do not understand—you understand nothing! You don't understand even your child! You don't know her yet at all."

Mother told me about it after. I wasn't present, of course.

"You are the most cruel father—you are simply the meanest man I ever met in all my life. To kill the ambition of your own child! It is a crime! And I tell you that Tini is what I feel she is, and will prove to you and the world what I know she will prove."

She still had such a confidence in me, you see.

Then later on I told her, "Father said I must now give up my singing." No more lessons!

"*Ach,* nonsense," she replied. "Never listen to him any more. You come for your lessons just the same. He's away all day and has not to know anything about it. Forget him!"

But then there came a little Jew—a little bit of a man. He was an agent, Levi was his name, and he came to Graz to make engagements for singers, and went to my teacher, of course. He said how the whole Vienna opera house was buzzing—talking about this new singer with the contralto voice—this young girl that sang there.

"Now," he said, "I am interested in young talent, and I telegraphed to the Dresden Royal Opera, and they are willing to pay the expenses and hear her there. And if they find she is what they think, and has talent and voice, they will make a contract with her, I'm sure."

So when my teacher Marietta von Leclair heard all this, she came right away to my mother.

"Now," she said, "*this* is the real opportunity! I know positively that this child will have a success. It is a sign of God!"

But poor Mother said: "Yes—perhaps. But we can not go a *second* time to the Field Marshal."

"We don't have to," cried Marietta. "We can borrow the money somewhere, because the opera will pay it back. She will have a success this time, I know."

"But suppose she doesn't," replied Mother, "and then we can not pay the debts?"

"Never mind, Mother, never mind," I cried. "I'll get it somehow."

I was so excited at this good news that I thought right away of another plan. A schoolmate of mine had married a rich man in Graz, and he was interested in me, too. So I went to him, and when I told him of my opportunity, he said right away:

"Now, here are 400 *gulden*. Take them—do any-

thing you want with them, but for God's sake, first get some *real* clothes! You can not go to Dresden looking like that. Buy yourself a decent dress, *mein Gott!* And buy also some real shoes!"

You see, I still had those old soldier shoes, made in the barracks.

I took his advice. But first I gave 200 *gulden* to my mother that she, too, could get a dress. *Ach!* poverty is so terrible. My heart aches still again when I think of those black days.

But this time I didn't say anything to my father about my trip. I lied because I thought it was necessary. I heard once how a famous man said that "A lie is too precious a thing to be wasted"—which means, I suppose, not to throw away a good lie on a poor occasion. So I made what I thought a very good lie for my necessity then—and I've never regretted it, either! I said to him:

"Father, I'm invited with a school friend to go on a visit to the mountains, but I'll be back soon—in a week."

Well, it doesn't sound a very good lie now, after all these years, but it was sufficient then. He believed me. Poor Father!

So, all alone, I went to Dresden. My feelings you can imagine. I went to the Hotel Weber, where Sem-

brich lived when she was young. I had already bought the new dress and hat and shoes, so I presented a decent appearance for the first time in my life. There were three other singers to be heard on trial—all contraltos. Well, they sang first, I was the last. To me who sat listening, they sounded, *ach,* so beautiful! I thought: "Oh, I am nothing to compare to them. I have no chance here!" And my heart dropped down into my new boots!

Well, when my turn came, I sang my same songs, "*Ah, Mon Fils!*" and the Drinking Song. I did my very best—I had to succeed this time! When I was through, Plateu, an old Hanover aristocrat—a big, wonderful man (he was the *intendant-impresario*—like Gatti-Cazazza here) he said:

"It is a very beautiful voice. I will engage you. I'll pay you 3,600 marks the first year, 4,600 marks the second year, and the third year I pay you 5,000 marks —so you will go up all the time. After the first year, if you disappoint us, I have, of course, the right to cancel the contract; in addition, you can sing in the cathedral, too."

Well, I was so overcome, I could only stare at him and nod my head. I couldn't speak.

"Now, we will make the contract," he went on. "You will sign first, and then we have to send it to

the King, and if he is satisfied, everything is well and good."

So I had my contract for 3,600 marks. I hardly knew what a mark was—I had seen so little money.

"Now," he said, "after you sign, and it comes back from the King, then your father must sign it, too. We will send it to you."

But that was not all, for when he told me I must come back in September to begin my engagement, I burst out crying and said:

"Herr Director, you tell me I must be back in September—but that is impossible! In October we expect another baby, and my mother—what will she do without me? I must help my mother! I must be there!"

And this man—well he just stared at me, then the tears ran in his old eyes, he was so touched.

"You poor child," he said. Oh, I remember how he looked at me standing there.

"You poor, blessed child! Don't worry. Everything will be all right."

But I still asked, "What will Mother do without me?"

"Oh," he said, "she can keep a servant *now*—she will not need you."

That comforted me, and so I signed the contract. My first engagement!

Happy? I should say so! I came home, and they had given me 200 marks to make the expenses. I had to go to Vienna to get the train for home—a whole day and a night. I had my new dress—but I was careful not to wear it on the train. I tied it up in a package and put my old one on, in spite of the new contract.

When Father saw me, he said: "Well, and did you have a good visit? You don't look like you'd been in the mountains. You look pale, Ernestine. *How is that?*"

"It is all right, Father," I said. "Now I can tell you the truth. I was not in the mountains at all!"

"But *where* have you been, then?"

"In Dresden, Father."

"In *Dresden?* And with whom, Ernestine?"

"Alone!"

Oh, you should have seen him! "What does this mean?" he said, turning to my mother. "Did you know about this?"

"Yes, I knew about it, Hans," she replied, smiling.

And then it started—the row! But when I said I had a contract with the Dresden opera, he just laughed and laughed.

"Oh, ho! Oh, ho! And you say they paid for your

trip?" he roared. "Well, that is very decent of them, I must say."

But when I told him the King had to sign the contract, he cried:

"Oh, the King wouldn't bother with a contract with you. Is this another fine story that you tell me?"

Poor Father! He didn't understand—he simply couldn't believe it. And I was a little bit frightened, too, and began to wonder if it was true myself. Then at last, two weeks after, the postman came with a big envelope with the seal from the Dresden Royal Opera —the contract!

And Mother! When she saw that envelope, she just put her head down on the table and cried and cried! She was all broken to pieces. Then she held me in her arms with such a look on her face—for she knew that good fortune had come to me at last.

"Tini! Tini!" she cried, "God in heaven bless you! But what shall I do without you?"

"Oh," I told her, "the Director says you can now keep a servant, and I will send you all I can, always."

Then Mother talked very seriously, and told me I must dress well and keep strong and eat good food. "You can have proper food now, thank God."

And then came her great triumph when she showed the contract to Father, and said, "Now, I hope, Hans,

AS AZUCENA IN TROVATORE

SCHUMANN-HEINK'S FIRST RÔLE IN OPERA AT DRESDEN IN 1878

you are satisfied at last and will believe your child, for here is the contract, with the King's signature!"

But Father—how he looked at it! "Why," he grumbled, "she gets more money than I get—and she'll make more money than I do!" He couldn't believe it—even then.

And I was proud like a peacock! And Father was proud, in his heart. He was a mighty good Father, but he was always frightened for me.

"God only knows what will happen to you, Tini, you are so young," he said.

Well, his fears were useless, because from the very first, I had one big protection: *I was homely.* I had nice hair and black eyes, but a yellow complexion always. Yes, I was homely—and I knew it. That is why vanity never bothered me. I knew from the beginning how homely I was. But, homely or not—nothing mattered then. For at last I had my contract for the Dresden Royal Opera—signed by the King!

PART II

II

And now comes Dresden and my first engagement at the opera. I have already told you of my contract there, signed by the King, and that at last I had put my foot on the lowest, but the first rung of the operatic ladder. I was very well looked after there, for it was then that the Princess of Tech began to take an interest in me. She had, through Tante Nina Kienzl, a great interest in my progress, so again, it was my beloved Tante Nina Kienzl who helped me. She passed me on to the Princess of Tech, and the Princess of Tech, in turn, gave me a letter of recommendation to Caroline, Queen of Saxony, so that I had a wonderful protector in the Queen when I went to Dresden.

The Princess of Tech was an English Princess and married to Baron Hugel. She lived in a beautiful chateau in Graz, and was very much interested in music. We often went there, and I sang. I remember that I had from her an old-fashioned brooch and earrings, made of malachite. As usual, I gave them to my mother, and she wore them during her life. Although I was little more than a child when I started in opera, she prophesied even then a big career for me.

Of course, I wasn't used to society in those days. The child of an army officer hasn't the right to go out at her pleasure, and make acquaintances by herself, as in this country. When I left home, I knew nothing of life. Such was my early training.

So when I sang in Dresden, nobody dared to say anything to me, because they knew the Queen of Saxony had an eye on me. They were really touched that I was so alone. Of course, they laughed at me and my country ways behind my back, but I didn't understand them then, so it didn't matter.

I lived there very plainly with the widow of the organist at the cathedral. I had only a little bit of a room on the fourth floor, and a corner with a little bed and washstand, but I had a real piano at last. It was all very plain, and I paid 60 marks a month. This paid my rent, and I got my coffee for this, too, and dinner, but the supper I bought myself. I bought for 7 pfennigs a kind of sausage, a piece of bread for 5 pfennigs, and a little glass of Culmbacher beer. It is a malt beer, very good, and it made me strong. My whole supper cost not more than about 5 cents in American money.

Every month I had my money, which I sent to my family, leaving only 75 marks—25 marks extra when I needed shoes and other things. The 3,600 marks I

did not get all at once. This I got at the end of the year, and then I had a vacation of four weeks. I could go home. I went home the first year feeling rich like a millionaire!

The opera house at Dresden was a wonderful place, clean and fine, and I sang for the first time *Azucena* in "*Il Trovatore.*" I had a tremendous success, but I got the part only once because they thought the voice was still too young. I sang only the small rôles in the beginning. I had my church position, also, but that was very hard for me, because I still didn't know how to read music very well.

Now I must tell you what first made me determined to learn to read music properly. It was at Easter time—a big celebration in the Cathedral. A great holiday and the King and Queen marched in full procession. I was singing in the Mass. When the King and Queen started down the aisle—well I stopped singing to look at them—forgot all about my cue, and *Ach!* I made an awful mess of it. I sang all wrong notes, the wrong pitch, of course—and the Conductor, Karl Krebs—already 77 years old—he gave me a good, heavy blow on the shoulder with his baton.

"You damn little goose!" he whispered. "Now—there—you are ruining my whole Mass!"

Well, that was bad! And it was also good—for me.

KARL KREBS

I almost ruined the Mass, but it gave me a new ambition to read the notes properly. It was wrong to be such a "damn little goose," as the conductor said, any longer.

Now I must tell you that when I came to Dresden I had had very little actual school education. Mother could not spare me from home and the children, as you know. Why, when I first came to Dresden, I could not spell right even in German. But after my contract at the opera I started by myself to read. Of course, I went at it in the wrong way. I had already heard about the great German philosopher, Schopenhauer, so I started off with a book of his, which was, of course, the very worst thing I could have tackled. Well! I couldn't understand a word. Some of my colleagues laughed at me and said:

"Why do you read that? You will never understand it. That is for brainy old faculty professors, not for opera singers—not for you. Drop it."

Well, I dropped old Schopenhauer, but I kept on in other ways, after a fashion, trying to improve myself a little. Then, too, my eyes were opened a bit by seeing and being with all those opera artists. I began to realize things I had never dreamed. I then started myself to be different. I began to take more interest in my appearance. I combed my hair better—a little

bit looser, not so tightly plastered back—and I started to look a little better. My figure was good, thank goodness! I was slender—never wore a corset or anything like that—and so I made the most of my hair and figure, so that people wouldn't think too much about my homely face, which the Director in Vienna had so bitterly objected to.

Well, at the end of the first year I had a vacation of four weeks, and I went home to Graz. And then it was that I got my first—what you call in America —"proposal." Yes. Two men actually wanted to marry me. Think of it! Both doctors from the Regiment. One had known me as a child, the other was my father's doctor.

Naturally I was much interested in these proposals, but my career meant far more to me. But you can imagine, when you hear all the time how homely you are, and then suddenly get two proposals at once. Well, a good fate protected me, for one of these men died in an asylum. He lost his mind, poor fellow—though he didn't lose it about me!

When I came home, Mother, of course, was so happy over my success, and Father was happy, too, though he wouldn't admit it. But he still kept a strict house even then, when I was an opera singer. No going out at night and always early to bed. They treated me

still like a child. But it was good. It kept me strong and healthy. And my poor old teacher, Marietta von Leclair, she was "tickled to death," and so proud of me. It was touching.

That was the first year. The second year I came back, I knew a little more about music, I had seen all the theaters and operas, could talk to people about these things, and had a few words to say for myself. The Princess of Tech was still interested and wonderfully kind. I remember, when we talked about my singing in the operas, I complained and said:

"It is all very well and good, these little parts, but they don't let me sing enough parts. I want to sing the great rôles—*Amneris, Ortrud,* and——"

"No, no," she interrupted. "They are right. You are too young. The voice is still far too young. If you sing these big parts now, you will be done for—the voice gone in a few years."

How truly she spoke—but I didn't realize it then.

Now, in the meantime, Professor Wüllner came to Dresden. Wüllner was a well-known conductor at that time. He was also director at the Dresden Royal Opera House with Schuck, and I thank him that I am musical. It was through him in the beginning that I learned at least the difference between high and low key. He held the same position there as Hans Schuck

—they were both directors of the opera. Well, Wüllner heard me right away and considered me a very promising singer. But he wanted to make me more musical so he let me sing in the vesper service every afternoon for practice. Not many people came to this service—only a few old ladies, mostly deaf, and this was good, because it left the church quite empty. Although I had a contralto voice and sang the alto parts, one day he'd hand me the tenor part to sing, another day the soprano, because my voice had a tremendous range up and down. So I sang all the parts for practice, and nearly froze to death doing it, too, because, you see, all the old Kings and Queens were buried underneath the church, resting peacefully in their tombs, and for that reason there could be no heating apparatus in the cellar, so we must shiver upstairs in the organ loft, out of respect to them.

I have a funny little story to tell about those days when I sang in the Catholic church. I have just told you how unmusical I was then and when I began my solo part in the Mass I could not always find the right note; that is, get the proper pitch. Well, the choir boys who stood next to me were far more musical, and one of those boys was very musical, so every time I came to my solo part I would give him a little kick to give me

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS AZUCENA IN TROVATORE

the proper pitch. One day I was so anxious and afraid he would forget me that I poked him and kicked him too hard it seems for then he whispered to me and said, "I can't find the right pitch at all if you are always punching and poking me beforehand! Don't worry, I will give you the note in time. But stop kicking me,—PLEASE!"

Well, for his valuable services at that time, I went out and bought him one day for three marks a cheap little watch, to express my gratitude. Now, here is the funny thing. The very first year I sang in America, I got a little note from a man in Brooklyn, telling me that he (the man who was writing the letter) was the little boy who used to give the right note in the Mass in the old cathedral in Dresden years ago, that now he was a man—and in the watch business! He said he wanted to tell me this and that he still had the little old watch I gave him so long ago, and that it was *really* that little *watch* that decided him to go into the watch business. I have never seen him since those early days, but I can see it all now just as it used to be, and remember the way I used to kick and poke him! Poor fellow!

Well, to return for a moment to Wüllner and the cold, cold church. It was at any rate a wonderful practice I had there, a great training in reading the

most difficult music. In fact, now I never have to make a great effort to study a part. I read it and sing it, and it's all due to the training at that time. Years later, when I was invited to create the great rôle of *Clytemnestra* in Strauss's "Electra," I surprised them all in reading that most difficult music at sight because it was by then second nature to me—thanks to Wüllner.

And so I sang on in Dresden. My life was one of routine and study, and singing of small parts in the opera. Although this was the beginning of my second season, I still sang only small parts in the opera. But I sang in concerts at this time. Life moved along in this fashion for three years without any great change, and then came the first great break and, of course—it was a man!

Yes, it was then that there came into my life Heink, whom I married—without the permission of the *Intendant* at the opera—and which brought about my great tragedy: I lost my position in the opera! It is written in all the contracts that no young singer may marry *without* the permission of the *Intendant*. By marrying I broke this rule, and so it was that I must suffer in consequence—and a heavy penalty I paid, as you will see.

But although I was very much in love with Heink and married him, I must confess I had had a slight

"flurry" as you say, before, and it was a soldier with brass buttons that first set my heart to thumping.

I remember it all to this day and just how he looked, for there in the first row at the opera he always sat—my nice young officer with his brass buttons. A fine Grenadier—a first lieutenant he was, but—poor like a church mouse, of course. He was all eyes for me, and I for him and we flirted over the footlights in good style. This was really my first love affair. When I came home and told my parents about it, Father, as usual, was terribly upset.

"What?" he cried. "What, you would marry a poor young officer and then right away—blessed as you are with perfect health—you start to get children—stop your singing and lose your voice, ruin your career after all this fuss? Never—never!"

My mother was against it, too, and they talked me out of it at last. I'd always listened to my parents in everything, naturally so I took their advice again. I wrote my poor little farewell love letter to the young lieutenant.

Of course, I wept for days—all of my blouse ran down with bitter tears. It was a very tragic time, and I was heartsore. For six weeks at least I couldn't look at, or even think of, a brass button at all!

But the next time it was more serious. I fell in love

with Heink and he desperately so with me, and then I didn't ask Father and Mother what to do—I just up and married him! I was only eighteen at the time. Then, as I have already said, I lost my position at the opera. And it proved a double tragedy, because Heink, too, lost his position at the same time for the same reason. He was Secretary to the Royal Opera in Dresden, and it was there I met him.

So there we were—both out of the opera, without work or money. Heink after some time finally got a small position in the Custom House which kept us alive, that's all. It was a desperate time—no work and the gradual realization of all I had lost. It was only Professor Wüllner who still kept me for the church singing at the Cathedral. Father and Mother were bitterly disappointed—really crushed—and that added to my suffering. I was desperate at what I'd done, because in me was always the longing—longing for my career. It was greater than anything else, it was my whole life as I found out too late.

It was a big mistake, my marriage then. Let it go at that. Heink didn't understand how I felt, of course. No man ever can. So the misery piled up. I worried and worried, looking for work, and on top of all that were the debts. Heink had many debts, you see, and I had never had debts before—it was against my nature.

Well, there we were. We didn't understand each other, like so many people that marry, that's all. But God knows it's enough!

Then came the first little comfort—when my first baby, my August, was born.

During this period I was always looking for work and tried everything. I went to Berlin for an engagement there, but failed. I couldn't get anything. I looked so poor and sick. All this worry affected my voice, which was in bad condition, as well as my spirits. My colleagues at the opera were all very sorry for me and tried to help me get chances to sing, but it was no use, for when the time came, I couldn't sing —I was so sick and discouraged. And this was my desperate situation.

There was only one ray of light at this time, a small one, but it proved to be a shining sun later on. I knew a famous music critic, Ludwig Hartman—the critic who first made Sembrich. Hartman always had a great warm spot in his heart for me, for he was interested in all young talent. He didn't spare the great artists, but for young talent he always had a kind word and a generous helping hand.

It was then that the Director from the Hamburg Opera, Pollini, came to visit Hartman. Pollini sounds Italian, but he was really a Jew from Prussia.

SCHUMANN-HEINK IN ONE OF HER EARLY RÔLES IN HAMBURG

When Pollini came to visit Hartman, Hartman said to me:

"Now, I will talk to Pollini about you, and maybe he can use you for something there in the Hamburg opera. We shall see."

So it was through Hartman that I met Pollini. At that time Pollini really didn't need or want me, but Hartman impressed him so much that he finally said I could come to Hamburg and do the small parts, anyway. So I was engaged at a few hundred marks the season, and life began again for me—thanks to Hartman. Small as it was, that engagement was like a gift from heaven.

I took my baby, little August, with me and went to Hamburg. Heink was transferred from Dresden to Hamburg in that time, still in the Custom House.

I look back at that period now. It was the beginning of the terrible struggle for success, for my career. I had only very small parts to sing, and a few hundred marks each year—and debts on top of it all. During that time too, the first year a child, and then every year another. But I kept up my courage somehow. I struggled on, and in the second vacation I went home.

At the station Father and Mother were there, waiting for me. When they saw me, they looked and

looked—they really didn't know me, I was such a sight!

Then Father cried, "*Ach! Gott in Himmel!* What have they done to you, my child!"

I was like a skeleton.

But I was home again, thank God! My parents took such care of me and fed me, and I found myself once more. And there, too, was born my second child, my Lotta.

After that I went back to Hamburg to sing again. The Director had sent me money, that I would at least have my fare back. I started in to work once more, but after a few months there was something more to face. Another child was to come. Another baby to bear and care for! I could do nothing. And so then my Henry was born.

Then came the most misery that is in the world. I was helpless, and I had no way to do anything more—just a few small parts in the opera. The few hundred marks of my salary was all the money I had—no clothes, barely food to eat, and all those children to care for. Why, in your money I had only about ten dollars a month.

By this time Heink had left me—he said he had to go. A new law was passed in the Custom House, and they didn't want Saxony people in Hamburg, so he

was transferred to Saxony, and I was left there alone with the children.

During all this terrible time at Hamburg I had nothing to sing but small parts—my only good parts were *Nancy* in "*Marta,*" and *Azucena* in "*Il Trovatore*"—which I got through Böetel, the tenor. He knew all about me and always wanted to help. He said to Pollini, one day:

"Why don't you let Heink sing '*Trovatore*'? Give her a chance. Let her sing it; I like her best."

And that's how I got this big part—because Böetel insisted—but otherwise I sang only small parts. I spoke in prologues or epilogues—I danced in the ballet—everything, anything. In fact, owing to that training, today I could be just as well as an actress as a singer.

Now I must tell you a most important thing that happened to me then—it has to do with Hans von Bülow. Hans von Bülow was a great figure in the musical world then. He was not only a great pianist, but he was also a great conductor. A wonderful man he was in every way. And this is how he came into my life at this time. There was to be a big Festival at Hamburg, and one of Brahms great compositions was to be sung —the Brahms Rhapsody, for alto, male chorus and orchestra, the poem by Goethe. Johannes Brahms was

an invited guest, and von Bülow was to conduct. I remember this so well. Brahms sat in the front seat. It was my first important singing in Hamburg outside the opera.

I came out in a plain white dress—the only one I had—street shoes, of course, as I had no slippers, and sang my part. Oh, how I loved this music! It is a wonderful thing. It was a great day for me, for there sat Johannes Brahms in front, and I sang—for him! It is most marvellous, this music, and the contralto voice has a solo, a wonderful prayer. Well, when I finished, the success was so tremendous I had to sing an encore. Now, that is a work that lasts one-half hour at least, and to get an encore to that—it was something, I tell you.

After it was over they applauded and applauded, and Johannes Brahms came on the stage to make his bow, but he wouldn't go alone. I didn't want to go, but they said "Yes," so out I came with those two great men—von Bülow on one side and Johannes Brahms on the other; and they both kissed my hand. Whatever success came later, there was nothing ever to compare to that—there was no moment like that. I rode the clouds! I shall never forget it all the days of my life.

Of course, this success made me the talk of the

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS A YOUNG WOMAN

town, and then von Bülow found out more about me. How poverty-stricken I was—how desperately I struggled for the daily bread. He was only a little man—but a great artist with a big heart. So when he heard how things were with me, he was not only interested, but wanted to help me.

"Why," he said, "this woman looks as if she was actually hungry—and she has little children, too! Well, I must do something about this."

So next day I had a message from von Bülow that he wanted to see me. I was so surprised and frightened, too. I thought I must have done something wrong, and went in great anxiety to him.

"Now, listen, my child," he said. "I have something to propose, but I want you first to take dinner with us here, at our house, today."

Of course, I was dumbfounded, but I said, "Oh, yes, yes, thank you—but *first* I must go home to my children."

"No," he replied, "no. *First* you take your dinner here, and then you can go home to your children and take some dinner to them, too. Now, what is your favorite dish?"

When I heard that, *Ach, Gott!* I forgot everything! I felt as I did back in the old circus days, when I was

a child. I could almost smell the good food again. My favorite dish?

"Oh," I clasped my hands and told him right away quick, "*Sauerkraut! Sauerkraut mit Schweinefleisch!*" Which is like smoked pork with dumplings—and this all to be cooked together if you make it right.

At that von Bülow roared and said: "Now, listen, Heink, you are to come here twice a week for your dinner. Eat as much as ever you want, and then," he added, "there will always be plenty for you to take back to your little children—enough to last a week!"

Well, I needn't tell you that I went for those good dinners, need I? What it meant to me—this kindness of von Bülow! Those good dinners saved my life!

But it didn't last very long, because then it was that my fourth child—my little Hans—was to be born. So this comfort lasted only a short time. That was in September, and Hans came in November.

And there was still another misfortune, too. They were soon to give the Mozart Cycle, and I was to sing the big alto part. Of course, with the expected arrival of my little Hans so close at hand I couldn't depend on myself, and I had to tell von Bülow.

Poor von Bülow, he had counted on me and was so upset and furious when I told him. Now von Bülow was very peculiar—the least thing could put him out

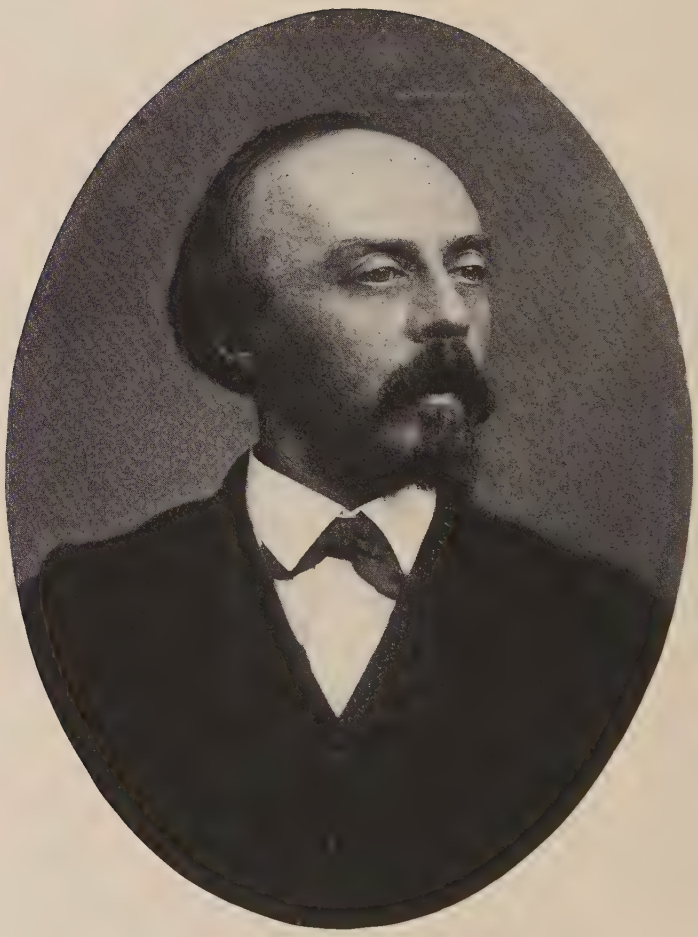
of patience, and he could be very unjust when he was angry. Oh, how he stormed around when he heard about the new baby coming!

"Why," he said, "*why* must this baby come just at *this* time, when we are giving the Mozart Cycle? Why couldn't it be born some other time just as well —why upset everything—spoil it all?"

Oh, he was so mad! He even said I did it on purpose! He refused to listen when I told him I could sing in the Mozart Cycle anyway in spite of the new baby coming. He wouldn't even hear of such a thing.

Of course, all this made me feel terribly, for I was so anxious for every opportunity to sing, and von Bülow's friendship meant the world to me. So, you see, my little Hans was a disturber and his arrival not only upset my good dinners with von Bülow, but broke up the Mozart Cycle as well!

But I kept on working at the opera as usual, until the very last moment. I sang even a few hours before Hans was born, I needed the money so. I sang and then went home. I had to walk. There was no money for a carriage, and no money for a doctor either, so I had only a mid-wife—which was all I could afford—and in a few days must be up and at work again. But the mid-wife was very good and kind, and I paid her $2.50 for bringing my child into the world.



HANS VON BÜLOW, GREAT CONDUCTOR AND PIANIST

It was a dreadful time—the starvation time. Only a few marks' salary from the opera and so many debts. Each period the sheriff came to take the furniture—everything they could lay hands on, because I must pay all these debts of my husband. It is the German law that the wife must pay the debts of her husband, so I did it. Poor Heink had left things in such a mess, and the whole burden fell on me.

Yes, it was a terrible time. I wonder how I ever got through with it. I was so desperate after Heink left that I made up my mind to kill myself and the children. You know, if you are desperate, you are blind —you see only one thing. At this time I was blind with suffering. It was in November. To the end of my life I shall remember the day—cold and damp, with a bitter wind. I started with my children. I had no proper clothing for them, and we were all shivering with the cold. I took them out, the baby in my arms, the rest running by my side. I had it in my mind to throw them and then myself in front of the train. The poor children didn't know what I was going to do; they only knew they must go with their mother. I had only one thought then—to make an end of us all. I planned it all out. I knew the time the train would pass—the tracks were already in sight. I didn't even answer the children when they called to me. I

was like a crazy woman. They were crying and clinging to me, stumbling along at my side.

Then I heard the whistle. I plunged forward to the tracks. We were already close upon them—only another step. I bent down to pull the children close together and ready. At that moment it must have been that my little Lotta saw my face. My agony—it was all written there, for right away she threw herself in front of me and caught my hand in her little freezing ones, screaming:

"Mamma! Mamma! I love you. I love you. Take me home!"

Her little, pinched blue face—her tiny child's voice screaming, "I love you, I love you!" *Ach!*—I tell you, it was as if the train had already struck me! I believe to this day that the dear Madonna I had always prayed to must have put into this child's mouth those very words—and the *way* she said them!

I turned back. I never again thought to kill myself.

So I kept on with the struggle. I still had only the small parts to sing. It was before Hans was born that I had already sent a letter to Pollini, Director of the opera, begging him to let me sing bigger parts to make more money.

I remember he sat there looking at me, so—sneer-

ing—his hands in his pockets. He looked and looked and then said:

"Well, I got your letter, Heink, and I really laughed when I read it. It was too funny."

"Herr Direktor," I cried, "you say you read my letter and you laughed, because it was *funny?*"

"Yes," he said, and got up and walked toward me laughing. "You asked that I let you sing the big contralto parts—*you*" (and he pointed his finger at me). "Why," he said, "you are nothing! You will never be a first contralto, never—never—never!" and he shook his fist right in my face and laughed again. "I can make you, maybe, a good *comédienne. Yes,* that I can do—but first contralto in the opera—*Ach, Gott! Never!*"

Oh, I was furious! I went up to him close, my face to his, and I said:

"Herr Pollini, now I will tell *you* something! I will be first contralto—not only of Germany, but I will be first contralto in all the world! Mark that!"

And then I went. I left him standing there, still laughing—at my joke!

So I was alone, indeed, after that. No understanding, no hope—nothing.

In that time I had one comfort—a good neighbor, Frau Merton, God bless her kind heart! She was the

SCHUMANN-HEINK AND POL PLACON, THE GREAT FRENCH BARITONE

wife of a poor public school teacher. She had nine children and lived in the flat next to mine. She was my true friend. When I went to the opera to sing, and

must leave my children alone, I would give her the key and say:

"For God's sake, if you hear any noise or fire—if anything should happen——"

"Yes, yes," she'd say, "never fear. Go and trust me. I will look after your children."

What that meant to me!

She was a wonderful woman—and with all her own big family and such poverty—yet willing to help me. We were sisters in poverty, and, as usual, the poorer the people, the more they cling together.

Well, I went on with my struggle in the opera, but always with such a sad, anxious face that one of my colleagues, Böetel, the tenor, noticed it and said,

"Now, Heink, why have you such a sad face all the time?"

"Oh, what is the use?" I replied. "What is the use to live?"

"You mean your husband?" he asked. "Well, other women have to go through such hard things. That is nothing. It will pass."

"No," I said, "I don't mean my husband. That is now forever a closed book. But I must go forward in my *work*. I can not stay always like this—I must do

something for my children. Do you think I want them always to suffer? I want to raise my children, educate them, start them in life."

"Well," he said after a moment, "I will tell you something. I have an idea. I'll see what I can do. I will arrange that you come and sing at the Kroll Theater. That will help you."

Now, the Kroll Theater was in Berlin. It is in the park, a beautiful summer theater, where opera is given, and famous throughout all Europe. All the great singers have sung there in their day—Nordica, Lehmann, and many other noted artists.

So Böetel said, "Yes, I will have you come and sing there, but, of course, you must come the first time without being paid."

"Oh," I cried, "is there really an opportunity for me at Kroll?"

"Why, yes," said Böetel, "yes, if you have a success there, it will be a great advertisement for you—a big step forward."

"All right," I said, "I will go."

The vacation was coming at the opera—there was always three months vacation in summer without pay —so this was a great chance for me.

Well, one day in August the telegram came. I still have that telegram. It said to come—that Böetel was

to have his benefit performance and would pay traveling expenses back, and maybe something more.

Of course, I didn't have any money to go with, but my good neighbor, Frau Merton, came to the rescue. I said to her:

"I have this telegram to sing at the Kroll Theater, but how can I go? There is no money for the trip—not even second class."

"Never mind," she said. "You must go—go third class, and I will take care of the children. Go and sing, and I'll give you money for the trip. It is your good luck that is now coming."

So she gave me the money she had put aside for the rent and said: "I give this because I believe in you. Take it, and God be with you! It's your chance."

She gave me all she had—and even sandwiches for the journey.

I went at night and arrived in Berlin at five o'clock in the morning. I couldn't go to a hotel, of course; there was no money after the fare was paid—not even for a cup of coffee. I had only a bundle with my things —costumes—in it. So I went and sat in the park right in front of the theater. I sat down on a bench and waited until the theater would open.

There I sat waiting, with my little Hans under my heart, because all this happened just a few months

before he was born. But I was so happy, although I had nothing to eat except the sandwiches that Frau Merton had given me, that nothing mattered then except this chance to sing.

Well, at ten o'clock comes Böetel, rushing madly to the theater. When he saw me on the bench, he stopped short and cried:

"Oh, here you are, Heink, you goose! Why, we have looked everywhere for you—all over the city—in all the hotels. We thought you didn't come! We didn't know what to do, and now—here you are—on a bench, in the park! Why didn't you go to the hotel?"

"But," I said, "I couldn't go to a hotel. I had no money."

"Bah! I had a room and breakfast waiting for you there."

"But I didn't know that," I told him, "so please don't be cross. I am so happy—so happy. Please don't scold me now. I can't bear it."

Well, he stormed around a few minutes more, and then we went in to the rehearsal.

So I got my chance and had a great success. Every one was talking, the people and critics. They told how I'd come there alone with no notices, no one to do anything, and it was my voice and art alone that had brought me this good fortune.

SCHUMANN-HEINK IN HAMBURG DAYS

I was happy, I can tell you, but as always I was thinking of my children—that I must hurry back to them.

So the Manager said, "Now, here are 30 marks for your fare back. Go home to your children, but in three days you must return to sing again, and then you will get 60 marks for each performance."

So I returned to Hamburg and Frau Merton with the good news—work for a few weeks, at least. The money was not much, with all those debts, and my little Hans soon to come, but—I had made a success at Kroll! The rest would come—perhaps not at once, but it would come.

After that summer season I went back to the opera at Hamburg. But at first things were no better there for me. Then my Hans was born, and the little money I had made during the summer was gone. It was the same misery over again. I sent two of my children, August and Henry, to my parents. I had to send them home because I had no way to care for them.

And then—well, one day I broke down and fainted. They brought me home to that empty house which had nothing left now but a little bed for Hans and Lotta—which the sheriff couldn't take—three hard chairs and the stove. I couldn't afford coals, so I had to burn *torf*—made into a kind of brick. It stays in

the oven for hours and becomes very hot. One thousand pieces of *torf* cost only two marks. It burned day and night.

This day they brought me home and put me to bed, and again my good neighbor, Frau Merton, came. I was unconscious for two or three days and knew nothing until I woke up one morning, and there by the bed sat my little Lotta, but no Hans in the room!

Yes, there was Lotta alone, in her poor dress, shivering, all huddled up like a little bundle, with an apron wrapped around her shoulders. She sat staring at me, eyes big as saucers, and I said:

"Why, Lotta, what happened. Why do you shiver like this?"

And she said in a whisper, "Don't—don't talk, Mother," and she started to cry, "because if you talk you will die."

"But what is the matter?" I asked. You see, I couldn't remember anything.

"You are so sick, Mother," she said. "The doctor was here, and said if you wake up and talk, you will die."

"Nonsense!" I said. "But where is Hans? Where is my baby?"

And then this poor child tells me that Frau Mer-

ton had Hans with her—that I must be quiet, and she must sit there and put into my mouth little pieces of ice all day long! My poor little Lotta.

"Well," I said, "I'm better now—I know it, and must see my baby."

So Frau Merton came, and I said to her:

"Oh, why did you leave Lotta alone here? And where is my baby?"

Poor woman! She said: "*Ach, Gott,* Frau Heink! What else could I do—with all my nine children? There was no one to help you, so I took your little Hans, because he was crying for food, and I bought for him milk. Some one must care for him, and Lotta must stay with you. I have done the best I could."

Then I began to understand what had happened and what that blessed Frau Merton had done for me. The picture stays always with me, of my shivering little Lotta and that cold, empty room!

I realized then that it was all beyond me—everything. I did not care for the whole world. At that time I didn't even care about my voice—I suffered so for those children. I saw the misery of it all. So I had to send again to my mother and say:

"Have mercy on my two little ones. Come! Come, for God's sake, and get now my Lotta and my Hans."

My heart felt dead, like stone, that I must now part with them all—but there was no other way. Besides, I realized, too, that if I didn't have the worry of caring for them—especially after having made that success the previous summer at Kroll—I would be able to do more in my career and go ahead faster. I must send my children to my parents for safe keeping. I *must* get ahead in my career. That must come first now. I must fight and push forward.

But, oh, it was sad—after they had all gone. When I got home at night, there was no greeting—nothing —no one to speak to, not a sound or sign of life. I was alone in that bare, desolate room. But never mind, it was all right—and so I finished the season.

Well, anyway, after this period things began to be easier and I must tell you how I first began to get better parts in Hamburg. It was when one of my colleagues—the prima donna contralto: Goetze was her name—started to make trouble. She was always my worst enemy and kept me down. Now, Pollini was much interested in Goetze, and so, too, was von Bülow. She had studied *Carmen* with him, so in a way she was a kind of *protégée* of von Bülow, always getting the preference, the big parts. She always sang *Carmen,* and I had to be content with *Mercedes,* a small bit, until this time—although I wanted to sing *Carmen*

myself—like every other singer on the face of the earth.

Well, Goetze had some kind of quarrel with Pollini —which often happens with prima donnas—and Pollini flew into a terrible rage.

He got furious with her, and told her:

"*You* are not the only one who can sing *Carmen.* There is some one else right here in the opera who can do it! I will now give the Heink the opportunity she wants. That's what I'll do!" (You see, Pollini had changed his tune about me.)

So it was that Pollini sent for me in great excitement and asked if I could sing *Carmen* that same night without a rehearsal.

Of course, I said, "You bet," or something equally strong in my best German!

I sang it—I'd have sung it if I had died on the stage —for I knew now was my chance at last.

But now comes a funny thing. You see, I had studied *Carmen* by *ear* with my teacher when I was very young, and from that time on I had always watched each of the different *Carmens,* always hoping I could get a chance to sing it, and had learned it in that way. I learned a little from them all—mostly their faults, though—by just watching; and Mahler, the conductor, said afterwards (Oh, how he

laughed!) that I had all the *mistakes* of all the *Carmens* combined! I had learned all the *faults* when I learned the part—which was perfectly true.

"Yes," Mahler said, "the Heink, she has all the peculiarities of all the *Carmens!* She makes the same stupid old mistakes that they all make—but she sings it, just the same."

And, thank God, I sang it that time and saved the performance!

Of course, I had no costumes at this time, and nothing ready for *Carmen,* but my colleagues were very good. They all helped out. One gave a veil, another a skirt, another beads, some one else a comb. Everything I could lay hands on I borrowed for that great occasion. And Marie Kauer—I'll tell you about her later—gave me her beautiful shawl.

It was funny, when you come to think of it, for all those things from the different singers were of all sizes and lengths: one was too short, another too long—one too big and one too small. But I managed somehow—everything except the shoes, and they were too short. *Ach!* I could hardly walk, they hurt me so. But I did walk somehow. I suppose excitement made me forget the pain. At any rate, my *Carmen* was a great success. Today I would not dare to do such a thing, but then—well, that is youth plus ambition.

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS CARMEN IN HAMBURG

The next opera was to be "*Le Prophète.*" Goetze—who was furious, of course, at my success in *Carmen*—cancelled again. She thought this time I was *not* prepared, and couldn't jump in as I did with *Carmen,* and would make a terrible fiasco. But Pollini, still angry, comes again, and asked if I could sing *Fides,* too.

Again I said, "Yes, you bet," in my strongest German.

Now, you must understand that *Fides,* in "*Le Prophète,*" is one of the biggest contralto parts ever written. It goes up and down with coloratura—oh, what a part! Even Pollini doubted me—in fact, they all thought I couldn't possibly do it; that I wouldn't dare to attempt this difficult rôle without even a rehearsal. But he was in such a hole he had to risk it.

I went home and studied like the devil was after me, and I did manage it somehow, and I sang *Fides* in "*Le Prophète.*" It was a tremendous success, I may say. And then for the third time Goetze, who was now raging, cancelled for *Ortrud* in "Lohengrin." And that, too, I sang without a rehearsal. Then I was made at last! Then it was that Pollini—all smiles, this time—came and gave me a new contract.

Well, I was ready for him—ready to sing *Carmen, Fides, Ortrud*—all the big rôles—everything. I took

my opportunity with both hands. I tried to learn from every one. I never was so swell-headed that I didn't know I could learn from others, and poverty had made me very humble. *Ach!* what I went through! All the years I slaved for my profession, until I came to the United States. It took me twenty years to make my career. That is why I respect to this day the highest and the lowest—be it a boy in the theater, a working man, every one can teach me a little bit of life—and all that helps to a career and success.

So now with the new contract at Hamburg, I was prepared for the next season. At last daylight ahead! This, I suppose, may be called the first big upward step in my career. I'd shown that I could sing those big parts. That is why they offered me a new contract for ten years. I was to get eight hundred marks a month—which is about $200 of your money—and also, after I had sung fifteen times, I was to get an extra five dollars for each performance. This naturally made me ambitious to sing many parts to make the extra money. At the same time it gave me the chance to develop my art in acting and singing everything, from *Katisha* in "The Mikado," to *Fides* in "*Le Prophète*"—one day a light comic opera part, the next day *Ortrud* in "Lohengrin"; one day I danced in

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS ORLOFSKY IN FLEDERN

the ballet, the next I recited prologue in a play. In fact, everything they wanted me to do, I did.

And now come the Kauer sisters—Fanny and Marie Kauer. Marie Kauer was a colleague in the opera at Hamburg. She sang all the first coloratura rôles—*Marta, Lucia,* and all those fine parts. She was from my country, Austria, and we were intimate friends. Both these sisters helped me in every way, with costumes and everything else. At that time I didn't have costumes for any of these big parts, and my colleagues were still lending me this and that to wear—I had to depend upon them.

They were all so kind to me at that time, and the Kauer sisters particularly. They lived in a boarding house and cooked their own meals. Fanny had a little oil stove with two burners where you could broil a steak on one side and cook vegetables on the other. Fanny was a wonderfully fine dressmaker, too. She made all the costumes for her sister Marie, so when I started to have this first success, the most important thing was the costumes. How to get them? I didn't have much money in the beginning, so I went to the Manager and said:

"If you will loan me 1,000 marks now, I can buy the materials I need, for if I am to sing all these big parts next season as first contralto, I must have some

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS FIDES IN THE PROPHET

costumes. I can not go on like this any longer, one colleague lending me this and another that—it's a terrible mess. Proper costumes I must have."

So we prepared for the next season by going to the cheap stores, Marie and I, and buying the materials ourselves. Then she cut out and made the things. She had one of those funny little hand-machines, and we sat oftentimes until five in the morning sewing. My gratitude to her will live throughout the days of my life.

Yes, the sun was shining now, after all these black years. Thank God, I had money now with which to live decently. Two hundred dollars a month! Why, I felt like a millionaire, and best of all, I was now able to send my parents money each month for taking care of my children.

In the summer I went to Kroll—the first of June—and from then started my big career. I came back to Hamburg to the opera the end of August, and the first of September the opera there opened—every year the same.

One of my first new big parts was *Leonora* in "*La Favorita*," and then *Adriano* in "Rienzi." I had not sung that before. Now I had also the great rôle of *Amneris* in "Aïda." In that time Hamburg was known as the "factory" of operas. They called it "fac-

tory," because every second week we did a new opera. Sometimes there was only one performance of the new work, and then it was "dead"—it was a sort of "try-out."

Pollini was very good to me at this time. He believed in me at last. I'll say this now and "give the devil his due." Besides the opera house in Hamburg, he had also the Civic Theater, and another theater in Altona (the other side of Hamburg) in Prussia. So when we didn't sing in Hamburg, we would sing in Altona. He kept me busy, I can tell you. Why, there was one month I sang thirty-two times in succession. For instance, I would sing in the afternoon in "Trilby" (the drama)—I sang behind the scenes the song "Ben Bolt"; then went over and sang *Lady Pamela* in "*Fra Diavolo*"—then back to the big Civic Theater in Hamburg.

It was about this period that I first sang *Erda* in "Siegfried"—and for each performance $5—like 20 marks—so I made 60 marks in one day—think of it! *Ach,* I would have sung *Mephistopheles* even, to have earned that extra money.

After Heink finally left me, I was for more than four years alone in the Hamburg opera. But with my new contract with Pollini things were getting always better. The children were still with my parents, and I

was having new big rôles all the time—and marching forward.

There were in Hamburg, as everywhere, little cliques of society people, and through one person you came to know another. I went out a little more then, and I remember one family in particular, the Goldschmidts. They really all helped to overcome my troubles and did much for me—not in money, but in sympathy and gifts. They were very rich merchants and very kind. It was through them that I met the Warburgs. The sons are now rich bankers in New York and were at that time the finest people in Hamburg. The Warburgs were very proud of their family. It was a very old family, and they were all real Jews (they kept clear from all intermarriage), so it was pure Jewish blood throughout the whole family line, and they were very proud of it.

It was at this time that I had my Benefit, at the opera. You know, during each season the different artists are entitled to a Benefit. Old Mr. Warburg, the father, was the finest kind of man. He was one of those who always gave generously, but never wished it mentioned publicly.

Well, it was at my first Benefit that he sent me a beautiful basket of flowers, and inside was a little envelope with two hundred marks, and sent in such a

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS JEHAN DE SAINTRÈ

way that it was a compliment. And it was through the Warburgs that I made another good friend—Mrs. Kahn, the old lady Kahn, in Mannheim—the mother of Otto Kahn in New York. She was indeed a kind friend. She provided me with warm blankets and shoes and many things during my bad days. I sang in Mannheim with tremendous success, but it was when my luck first turned, and I still did not have the proper clothes. When she saw how poor I looked, she would dive into her own wardrobe and say:

"That won't do! You know, Heink, you are a prima donna now, and you must dress better—you can not wear such poor-looking clothes. I will give you something nice—something pretty and fashionable."

So she would pull out this and that, and say, "Now, my child, which do you like best—which do you want?"

I remember there was a coat, all rich black satin, with a very fine lining, and I said:

"Oh, this one, please, the black one. That is best for me, because no one can see if there is ever a spot!"

I was always practical, you know—too practical—even in those days. My terrible poverty was not yet so far in the background that I could forget it and be even a little bit extravagant. It took me many years to learn to spend money freely. I still had the inclina-

tion to count the pennies. Of course, Mrs. Kahn would laugh at me for not taking the pretty one, but she gave me any number of things besides clothes. She saw to it that I was supplied with needles, thread, pins, and even safety pins! Yes, she taught me how to use safety pins, for I had always had just plain pins before. One day she asked me why I didn't use safety pins, and I said:

"Oh, they are so expensive, I can't afford them."

"But, my child," she said, "that is dangerous at the opera if you use ordinary pins. When you sit down they will hurt you maybe. You might even have an accident and part of your costume fall off, pinned up the way you are! No, no, that won't do."

And so it was dear old lady Kahn who gave me my first introduction to safety pins. That will sound very funny, I am sure, to the people who read this story, but it's the truth.

It was during this period that I traveled for Pollini, too. I went on a concert tour once to Scandinavia with my old friend, Böetel, the tenor, who first introduced me at Kroll.

I was making a name for myself at last, but I still didn't know much about oratorio singing until I had been in Hamburg several years, and oratorio singing is important for all singers.

There was one wonderful singer, Matilda Brandt —a big prima donna at our Hamburg Stadt opera, and she taught me a great deal.

There was also another famous singer at that time with the same name, Brandt, only her name was Marianna Brandt. There is often confusion about these two artists for they were both beautiful singers and famous. Matilda was a great dramatic soprano, and Marianna a great contralto. She was famous, too, and I may add she was very homely, like all contraltos who are real contraltos, she was homely. They are always homely, that seems to be the fate of contraltos. Soprano singers may be beautiful and even mezzo-sopranos may be beauties, but the real contralto must be homely!

Marianna Brandt sang *Leah* in the "*Maccabeus*" and she was a most wonderful *Fides* in "*Le Prophète.*" She was always my ideal contralto. But it was the great Matilda who was prima donna at the Hamburg Opera and taught me a great deal in the beginning as I have already told you. I was to sing the contralto part in "Paradise and Peri," by Robert Schumann —the most wonderful music, but I had never sung in oratorio since 'way back in the time of the Ninth Symphony with Marie Wilt, so when I got this new engagement, I said:

"Oh, I don't know what to do. I'm afraid I can not sing this."

But Matilda Brandt only laughed at me. "Yes, yes, you can," she said, "and I'll tell you what we will do. You come to me and we will study it together. I'll show you the proper *style*."

And she did. She did many other kindnesses too. One time, when things were especially bad, and I was home, sick, she heard about it. It was at Christmas time. Her husband, it seems, was stage manager at Cassel, and she was in Hamburg, singing, and couldn't go home for Christmas. So when she knew the misery I was in, she said:

"Now, Tini, I will make you a proposition. I know you are a splendid cook, so I will buy a nice fat goose and everything that goes with it, and you can cook us a fine dinner. So we will have our Christmas dinner together—you and I."

So out I went and bought the big pots necessary for this grand cooking, got the coals and everything all ready, and then she sent the fine goose and all the fixings. I cooked a splendid meal, I can tell you. Yes, we had the most wonderful Christmas dinner you can imagine, and we stuffed ourselves well—but, even so, there was plenty left from that fine goose—a lot left for me, the grease and all. It reminded me of my early

childhood days, and like my dear mother I saved every drop of it—and made soup the next day.

And so it was that Matilda Brandt was my good angel and my Santa Claus, too—all at the same time!

Well, to leave the goose which I liked, and go back to something less appetizing—the oratorio!

I studied with Matilda Brandt many of the oratorios. It was she who sang with me in "*Le Prophète*" that first time when I jumped in without a rehearsal, and when I sang *Carmen* too, with all the mistakes! When I sang "*Le Prophète*" with Matilda Brandt, it was a tremendous hit. She told me just what to do and how to act, to cross here and there—all the stage business—for it was pretty hard without a rehearsal, you know. We were always very good friends. Later on she left the theater because of Klafsky (who was also a year in America at the Metropolitan). She came to the theater and in a way usurped Matilda Brandt's place—which is the way with the world as well as opera singers. Sometimes it is very sad—although it is good—to realize that there is always some one to take your place. So it must go, it seems.

Katherina Klafsky was Hungarian by birth. She was born in a little village in Hungary and her father

DIE WILDE TONI

SCHUMANN-HEINK, HALLENSTEIN, SCHUMANN

was the shoemaker of the town. At the beginning Klafsky sang in the chorus and she worked herself up from obscure little parts that way. She sang in Hamburg under Hans von Bülow. Von Bülow didn't like Klafsky—he loved Matilda Brandt because she was such a perfect musician, but Klafsky sang her own way and this von Bülow couldn't stand. But, in spite of this, Klafsky always made a great hit with the critics. She was a most remarkable singer in many ways—and later, when they wanted to honor me, they used to compare me with this same Klafsky—said I was the same kind of elemental artist—very realistic; and I suppose this is a good time for me to say something concerning this.

In everything I do I have always followed my instincts, because acting is second nature to me. I never study a part as some artists do, before a mirror and all, acting it out, looking this way and that, to see how to do it. No! I never could then, and I never can today, go through with a rehearsal properly. They always say I am absent-minded, inattentive. But that isn't really so. I am really thinking all the time of the points I want to make, and working it out in my own mind. So, very often when I seem so dumb at rehearsal, I surprise them all at the performance.

When I married Schumann—which I'll tell you

about soon—he used to work over the parts with me, and he always wanted me to study differently. He would say, "That is not right—that is all wrong"—and tell me that I must do it thus and so, marking it all out for me very carefully. But I would say to him: "*Ach, Du lieber Gott!* leave me alone—don't tell me any more—leave me alone. I must do it my own way. If I am not myself, I am no good"—and that's the truth.

Then poor Schumann would throw up his hands and say, "No, you are no good, but you are a damn genius, all the same"—which I suppose was another way of saying that I must do it by instinct, and work things out in my own way, without following any rules.

I studied "Joseph in Egypt," "The Messiah," "Elijah" (which is not so hard), and Handel's "Herakles" —a wonderful piece of music, and all those classical things, with Matilda Brandt. When at different times the oratorios were given in Hamburg, I always went to every performance to be sure not to make mistakes —to keep the style "pure." In those days there was a very distinct *style* for oratorio—we tried to keep it that way, "pure," and we studied it so. Unfortunately, people today don't know or care so much about style, and something of its true spirit is lost. You must

realize that in singing *style* is very important, particularly in the interpretation of the classics. I studied all this. I never stopped studying, in fact. It was when I was left alone—when my parents took the children —and I was free for the first time of my terrible anxiety regarding them, that I laid the firm foundation for my career in all its branches, for you must always remember that it takes more than a beautiful voice and just singing to make a really great career. It was at this time, too, that I met Schumann, whom I afterward married and whom I'll now tell you about.

Schumann was an actor—and a very wonderful actor. When those theaters of Pollini came together under one management, I met Schumann in my work. He was a Mason, and you know what the Masons are —men of the very highest principles. It is a wonderful religion, really, if you understand and are faithful to it. But poor Schumann had been very unfortunately married. His wife became insane, and he was left with a child only a year old, Walter, my step-son, and I may as well say right here and now that he is one of my best children, step-son or not.

I first met Schumann at a big *soirée*—a "party" you call it in America. This was in May, and his wife died on New Year's Eve. Then it was that I began to help him look out a bit for his baby once in a while.

He used to tell me about his misfortunes and about this poor little child. It made my heart ache, of course, and I said:

"Oh, if you will only let me come and see your little boy."

I was so hungry for my own children—my arms were empty and aching for them—and to see this little baby of Schumann's once in a while was a perfect godsend to me. That was the beginning of our friendship.

Of course, I was very busy with my career then, because I was singing all the big new parts, and life was going along more smoothly.

This was the most beautiful time in my career. Alas, it is not to be had any more these days! Everything was so happy, so simple and different from now. We had such good times together with our colleagues. We would all go to take our supper after the opera, a glass of beer and something to eat, each one paying his own share—"Dutch treat," you call it here. Yes, we came together at these times, and what a wonderful comradeship it was. I never knew anything like that in the United States. I missed it so at first. I never could understand it, but such comradeship does not exist in America, and it's funny, too, because the Americans are so gay and sympathetic and have nat-

urally such a frank spirit, but the life here is different. The simple pleasures that exist in any foreign city, such as sitting out in a garden, drinking your good beer and listening to the music for a few pennies, or loitering along the Boulevards as you do in Paris, watching the crowds—no, no, it is not done in this great country of America. They do not seem to understand or realize here the charm and relaxation such innocent pleasures can give. But it is not the wine, or the beer, or the food, alone that makes this true; it is the comradeship—the thing I am talking about. Not always like this silly talk of love and sex, as nowadays. We singers used to talk about the doings of the great world, about the opera, the play and life, too. *Ach,* a hundred things of interest. Of course, here when you go out—if you even look at any one (and you could be as old as Methuselah)—they think at once, "*Ah ha!* What does this mean? Is this an affair?" and so on, etc. It's always business here. Well, so it goes. It's a deep subject and not to be argued and settled in a sentence or two, by me! But I know that every young singer and artist from America, who goes abroad to study, realizes the thing I am talking about, and wishes it could be the same in this country.

Well, to go back to Schumann. He was a fine

scholar as well as actor. And I must tell you he played once with your great Edwin Booth in Germany. It was when Booth played *Hamlet* in Hamburg. Booth played in English, of course, as he spoke no German, and Schumann in German. He was such an admirer of Booth. He said there was never any one like him. Schumann was such a fine actor himself—so handsome and such a gentleman. But he was so overcome with admiration for Booth's art that he bent down and kissed his hand after the performance, and said to me afterward, "Tini, if you could only see this great man act and hear his wonderful voice!" Schumann had heard all the great artists of that time, but he said:

"There is no one to compare with this man Booth —no one! I don't think there ever will be again. It is a God-given genius!"

It interested me very much to have a letter from the daughter of Edwin Booth, who wrote that she was with her father in Hamburg when my Schumann the "handsome blonde tenor" as she called him, kissed the hand of her father. Isn't it remarkable that she should have been in the audience that very night and now, after all these years, writes to thank me for the tribute my Schumann paid her great father? Schumann was always like that. He had the greatest reverence and respect for all true art and artists.

And now to go on with my story. It was on New Year that Schumann's wife died, I had already got my divorce from Heink. Then it was we decided to marry.

He said, "I can not see why we should not marry at once."

But I replied: "How is that possible? You are a Mason, and I am a Roman Catholic."

A divorced woman, you know, can never marry while her husband is still alive. In the Catholic Church it can not be done. You can not go to communion if you marry again while the former husband lives.

"Then, too," I said, "I have my own four children at home with my parents, and I am sick and tired of being separated from them. In these few years I have established my position as first contralto, and I can now afford to have them with me. I can not do anything that will keep them from me now."

But Schumann wouldn't listen to objections. He said: "Well, bring your children, Tini, and then we will have five children to start with!" and he laughed. "That is a good beginning!" Then he added, very seriously, I remember: "If you will only promise me not to change, then nothing else matters. It will be more than the whole world, because I love you."

And I said: "I love you, too, Paul. It is the first time

that I know what real love is. I not only love you, but I respect you."

And so, in spite of my religion, we were married. My love for Schumann overruled everything—even that. Schumann gave me, then, for the wedding, as is the custom with the Masons, a pair of white gloves, and he said:

"These gloves are white, unsoiled, and so will I keep you and hold you in my heart, Tini, until my last hour"—and he did.

I have those gloves to this day—they have grown old with me. *Ach!* What life does to us—and what we do to ourselves!

Schumann had always the greatest influence on my career and art. You can imagine what a benefit his knowledge was. He'd talk to me and tell me so many things I didn't know. And my songs—always before I sang them, he would speak the words to me. Oh! when he would speak those words! What expression—what interpretation! I learned so much from him in that way. There is one great song, "*Befreit*," by Richard Strauss, that I studied with him. The words are so beautiful. It is the farewell of a father to his wife as he leaves the children in her care. Schumann studied this with me so carefully, so tenderly. I think now perhaps at that very time, when he was already fail-

ing, he felt he had only a few more years to live. It was one of my most beloved songs, but after he died, I could not sing it any more.

We always worked together, studied and read, after our marriage. He would read to me on Sunday afternoons and recite to me from the classics such wonderful things. He then started to work with me on the operas—the acting, the interpretation, and he would say, "I don't like this—or that"—and tell me why, explain it all. I can never cease to be grateful to him all my life for the inspiration he gave me always. To this very day it still comes to me; it lives on in my heart.

Such criticism as he gave is of the highest value to an artist. One can never either hear or see themselves, and it is a necessity—if one would make real progress in art—for constant criticism. Any young artist who does not realize or disdains this can never reach the greatest heights.

So began my new married life with Schumann, but as always in the life of any artist, there were rocks ahead. It was not smooth sailing even then, for I soon had to face the bitter knowledge that Schumann was a sick man—very sick indeed. It was a great misery, his illness—a sorrow to us both—and he suffered terribly. Everything suffered, even his acting.

PAUL SCHUMANN, SCHUMANN-HEINK'S SECOND HUSBAND

This was the beginning of his breakdown, which later on cost him his life.

At the beginning, although Schumann was really ill, he still continued to act at the theater, and the following year my next child, Ferdinand, was born.

And now I am going to tell you a story that *is* a story—one I venture to say that has never been told in a book before, not even in these days of telling! But it's too good to keep to myself any longer. And why not? We have now all kinds of stories and plays —"Dancing Mothers," "Bachelor Girls," "Bartered Brides," "Lost Grandmothers"—so why not a story (and a true one, too) about a nursing mother—the greatest novelty of all, these days when everything is done by capsules and machinery! So here it is, and I am the heroine!

It was all on account of my new baby, Ferdinand, who, as Fate would have it, came only a few days before my first invitation to sing as guest in Leipsig. It was a great honor, of course, and I insisted I must go, even if my baby was only a few days old. I had done it before; I could do it again.

But Schumann objected. "No, no, you can not do it. The baby is only ten days old. I will not allow this, not while you are my wife. You are nursing him, and he can not be left alone."

"But," I said, "I nursed all my other children and sang at the same time, because I needed the money; and we still need the money; so I can do it again, even if Ferdinand is only ten days old."

Poor Schumann was furious, but I said:

"Never mind, Paul; I'm going just the same. I will make everything all right. I will give the baby the bottle before I go, and maybe he won't know the difference!"

I was determined, and you know when a woman is determined, not even the best of men can do anything about it. So off I went, and left Schumann storming, but my little Ferdinand quite happy and content with his new bottle.

Yes, I went to Leipsig, and the next morning I had rehearsal—"Lohengrin" it was. Well, by that time, as any mother can realize, I was beginning to suffer very much with pains. Alas! I needed my little Ferdinand more than he needed me, it seems. Such is the way of nature. And then to make matters still worse, in rehearsal one of the actors hit me accidentally in the chest, and I screamed with pain and nearly fainted. Now, this was something I had not reckoned with when I left home—how much I should need that baby. But, thank goodness, good fortune was once again with me.

There was at this rehearsal a poor chorus woman who heard how I was suffering for my baby. She herself was in great distress. She told me about her baby. It was only two months old, and she herself too weak and sick to nurse it, and her poor child really dying of starvation. Oh, if they could only afford a wet nurse, but they were too poor!

"Oh, Frau Heink," she said, clasping her hands, her poor eyes full of tears, sobbing, "I heard about your little baby at home and what you are now suffering for him, and I thought perhaps—perhaps—maybe—you—you—"

Ach! but she didn't need to say any more. I knew what she meant!

"*Lieber Gott,*" I cried, "where is this child? Where is it? Bring it to me. I will nurse her—right away, quick now!"

So we finished the rehearsal, and I went with her to her miserable little house. Oh, that poor baby! Almost a skeleton! You should have seen it. I took the little thing into my arms at once and put her to my breast. At first she was frightened, but then—*Ach! Gott!* You should have seen the little creature! And I was so happy, too, and I gave it plenty. The mother stood by crying, with joy this time.

Then I said to her: "Now, bring your child to the

hotel, and I will keep her there while I am here, and we will take her to the theater while I am singing, too, and we will save this child. This is the good God's work."

I will never forget that poor woman's face—never! how she looked at me! *Ach!* So she came to the hotel with the baby, and every two hours I fed it—and then there happened another funny thing. We brought the child to the theater and put her on top of the basket where I had my costumes, in the dressing-room. I was all painted up for the first act as *Ortrud* in "Lohengrin," with the big red wig, and the paint, and my eyes all blackened. I went to take up the child, but it was so afraid, when it looked at my face and saw the red wig, it began to scream at the top of its voice. It yelled so loud that the manager came rushing around to my dressing-room, and the prima donna, too, and every one was frantic. *Ach,* they said, they could not sing because the baby was making such a noise. It was unbearable—the opera would be ruined!

Well, I didn't know what to do. I just stood there and then all of a sudden I had a good thought, for right away I tied a big towel around my head over the red wig and turned my painted face away from the baby—and then it was all right. She stopped crying

at once, and the opera was saved—and so was the child!

So I had the baby for four days and four nights and started it on the road to health. And now comes another point. As you will see, my rôle as a nursing mother was an important one. Sixteen years after, I came again to Leipsig as a guest singer, and after the performance came a little knock at my dressing-room door, and there stood a woman with such a look in her eyes! She seemed familiar somehow, but I couldn't remember just where I'd seen her, and with her was a lovely-looking young girl. And they were both smiling and bowing, and the woman said to me:

"*Ach,* Frau Heink, forgive me, please, for disturbing you. Perhaps you have forgotten what happened years ago, in this very theater, and how you saved my child. Here she is! This is my daughter. This is the little starving baby you nursed sixteen years ago!"

Well, I looked and looked, and then—I remembered it all! The poor little starving baby! And there she stood now, a beautiful young girl. What a happiness it was to see that sweet creature! And she looked at me, very blushing and shy, and then said:

"And, oh, Frau Heink, oh, can you believe it?" clasping her hands. "I, too, have a contralto voice!"

Of course, at that, I just took her to my heart again, and I gave her a good big hug this time, and said:

"Well, my child, perhaps you inherit that, too, from me! Who knows?"

We laughed over it all and had a few happy moments together. I heard her sing later on, and she was right: she had a contralto voice and very promising. I never saw her again, I am sorry to say, but perhaps she is singing somewhere now. I hope so.

Well, to return to my own baby and Schumann in Hamburg. I found a tragedy—or maybe it was a comedy, for it certainly was funny—awaiting me at home.

Leave it to a male to be the troublemaker! Such ingratitude! For when I got home, my little Ferdinand refused to have his meals with me! That child positively would not come to me. That is something for scientific and medical men to straighten out. I don't know why—whether he was jealous or what; but the fact remains that Ferdinand preferred his bottle to his mother! So again I was in a desperate plight. I must find another baby to take the place of my ungrateful Ferdinand.

Now there was a poor mother in the town that I knew who was unable to care for her child. So I told her to come to me twice a day and I would nurse the baby. This I did, and all was well. And again, later, as

always, history repeated itself, for years and years after this mother came and brought with her a tall young man over six feet high and in his uniform. He came with her, of course, all unsuspecting, for when she said with great pride, pointing to him, "*Ach,* Frau Heink, *here* is the little baby you nursed years and years ago." Well he gave me one look, blushed red like a lobster and turned round and simply ran away without a word! He was out of sight in a minute!

Of course I laughed like anything, and the next day his poor mother came to me again. She had scolded her son she told me, and said to him: "Why on earth did you behave like such a donkey, to run away, instead of going down on your knees and saying, 'Thank you, thank you, Frau Heink for saving my life and making a man of me!' "

Well, I never saw him again either, but I hope that since then he may have perhaps developed a sense of humor, so that if he has ever ventured to hear me sing in the opera, he's been able to do so without blushing and running away. So you see, my life was always full of adventure and I played as many rôles off as on the stage.

And now we come to the greatest moment in my career—a break that meant a complete change in my

work, my home, and, I might almost say, my nationality, although I didn't realize it at the time.

I was now turning my face toward America. It was Maurice Grau, that fine man and impresario, manager of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York at that time, who was my good angel in this. It was owing to his persistence that I finally left Hamburg. Yes, he was my fate in this, and a good fate it was—and is to this day. But I must first speak of two other equally great events, musically, in my life as an artist. I mean London and Covent Garden, one of the most famous opera houses in the world; and Bayreuth, the shrine of Richard Wagner. The American opportunity came in this way:

Mr. Grau, like all great impresarios, traveled all over Europe in search of new singers. He had already heard me sing in opera in Hamburg, though I didn't know it at the time. It was *Amneris* in "Aïda" that he first heard me sing, and then he wanted me right away for New York. He spoke to Pollini, but Pollini said:

"*Ach,* no, the Heink? You can not get that woman. I should say not! Why, she has still a contract with me for nine years more. Go away! You can not have her." Pollini appreciated me now, you see.

But it seems that when Maurice Grau wanted some-

thing, he wanted it very much, so he still had me in mind.

Of course, I was singing in concerts as well as opera during the Hamburg years. In the summer I would go with the other singers on concert tours. Pollini, our manager, arranged this, and we went everywhere —Scandinavia, Dresden, Vienna, all over. And most important of all were the concert tours to Paris. I made a great success there, and the French people were simply wild about my voice. They wanted me to learn French and to sing there in opera. But, as usual, I said:

"No! no! No, I can not do that. I can not give the time. I can not leave my husband and my children."

I wouldn't listen to it.

It was about this time that Nordica was in Berlin —where I had sung with her *Marthe* in "Faust" and other parts—and Sembrich too was there. They both began to talk and argue with me about this—learning French, etc.

"What is the matter with you, Heink? Why don't you now study Italian and French? Get out of that hole—make a world reputation for yourself. You don't want to stay in Hamburg forever. Go to America. Go to the Metropolitan, and then you will have the world at your feet."

"But," I said, "how can I? I have all my children and husband. I can't leave them."

"Children and husband! What have they to do with an opera singer?"

"Besides, I have my contract, too."

"Nonsense!" Nordica said. "Break your contract. Buy yourself off. It's often done."

"No," I said, "that is not possible. Besides I haven't the money." You see, I was always prudent—too prudent, sometimes. I said: "If I break my contract and go to America, I'm done for in Germany. I can not again sing in Germany if I break now."

Of course they talked and argued with me, but finally gave it up and said I was hopeless.

Well, as I told you, I went to Paris and had a grand success. But after I came back, the idea was still working in me—all that Nordica and Sembrich had said—and I was beginning to realize it myself. Should I learn French and go to the opera? I looked at my children and said, No. But I wanted to do it, and perhaps should have done it anyway, even if Pollini, our manager, had not died soon after.

But Pollini died, and his death was cabled all over the world. And, can you believe it, the very next day I got a cable from Grau:

"Pollini dead. You are now free. Will you sign con-

tract for the United States and the Metropolitan Opera House?"

Well, you may imagine how I felt. In Heaven at the very thought, and yet still afraid I couldn't do it. Schumann was sick at this time—very ill he was. And on top of this he had just had his discharge from the theater. On Christmas Eve they did this mean trick to him—after all those years, they sent his discharge! Of course, this was after Pollini died. The successor of Pollini, Bachaur, did it; and to add to the insult, sent it in the same kind of envelope they'd send a discharge to a chorus girl! Think of it! And to such an artist as my Schumann!

But I didn't give Schumann this letter then. He was too sick. I didn't want to so spoil his Christmas, and I didn't say anything about the Grau cable, either. I kept my secret and sang at the opera as usual, but I thought, "At last has come the moment of a new fortune—a turn in the road. I felt that a door was wide open to me. I didn't know what was on the other side, but still the door was open.

I said to myself: "I'll make a mistake if I don't do this! It was the same as in Dresden when I went ahead without saying anything to my father."

And so again I acted for myself, and by myself alone. I cabled Grau:

"Please send contract to sign."

Then it was that the new manager, Bachaur, came and said, "Now that Pollini is dead, and I am in charge here, Heink, we will make a new contract, you and I, for the opera."

But I looked at him, and I said, "No, we will not."

Of course, he was dumbfounded. "Why, what do you mean? Where will you go?" he asked.

"I don't know," I said, and shrugged my shoulders.

I didn't tell him even then about America. But he saw that I had something on my mind—"up my sleeve," as you say—and he cried out:

"Why, Ernestine, Ernestine! What is the matter with you? Come, tell me what's on your mind."

He was simply amazed when I refused to tell him why I wouldn't make a new contract. He shouted: "What is it? What is the matter? What has happened?"

"Oh, many things," I said.

"Why, you don't need to worry now," he replied. "We are all anxious to have you stay. We couldn't get along without you, Heink—you know that."

I said: "Yes, maybe. You are very nice and complimentary now, very kind, but I don't know what I will do."

Well he went away then, but the next day he came

again, very smiling, rubbing his hands (I can see him now), and he began patting me on the shoulder, and he said:

"Now, Ernestine, come, be sensible, and make the new contract now. We need you—we must have you. You can have anything you want—anything! Your salary will be raised. You can have it all your own way."

Then I looked at him—hard, straight in the eye, and I squeezed my eyes up like I do to my children sometimes, and when they see that, they run quick, I tell you! So that's what I did to him. Well, he didn't run—but I think perhaps he felt like it! Then I said:

"Now, I will tell you why I will not sign the contract. I wouldn't sign it if I had to go and sing in the lowest vaudeville house in Hamburg—not if I had to sing in the streets or in the circus again, like I did when I was a little girl. No, sir. I'm through. I have slaved for you all. I have been underpaid for years—but it is not for this I refuse your contract, but for the meanness you showed my Schumann—that great artist—who slaved for Pollini years and years in this theater. Yes, for that meanness, for sending him (sick as he now is, and on Christmas Eve, too) his discharge, and in an envelope you would send a discharge to a chorus

girl! That cruel letter! No! You can—well, you can go to *Dunder*—or somewhere else"—and I gave him a good German word for it, too!

He was simply speechless! He didn't know what to do. Then he began to argue with me. The discharge was a mistake. He would engage Schumann again.

"Of course, we will engage him again," he said. "He is a wonderful actor—a wonderful stage manager, too. Yes, we will engage again Schumann, and all will be as before."

"You will, will you?" I said. "Well, I'll tell you now you won't! It's too late, my friend. Schumann doesn't even know yet what has happened to him. I didn't show him your miserable letter. And now I have the pleasure to tell you I've already signed a contract with Maurice Grau for the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. Furthermore, I have also signed a contract for the Berlin Royal Opera—six months with the Metropolitan and six months in Berlin. Now what do you think of that?"

"What? What?" he cried. "What's this? What are you telling me? America! Impossible!"

"Impossible?" I laughed. "Is that so? Well, it is so impossible that I can show you the contracts this minute. Also, I may tell you, Herr Direktor, that the Berlin Opera is so very nice as to let me have six weeks

traveling from New York and back every year, so you see how anxious they are to have me. You are not the only one that wants me. I can have a contract now in any city in the world."

Of course, that finished him. There was nothing more to be said, and I went home triumphant—to tell my Schumann right away, because I had already received the letter about the contract from Grau—who was in London—that morning.

Well, I went home and said: "Now, Paul, thank God, you are well enough to hear the news I have to give you. I have bad news to tell you first, but at the same time very happy news, too."

Poor Schumann looked at me. "What is it, Tini? What has happened?"

I said, "This letter came on Christmas Eve to you." I had the letter in my hand.

"On Christmas Eve? Why didn't you give it to me then?"

"Because you were too sick."

"But I can not imagine what it is."

He opened it and read. Poor Schumann! He got very white in the face. It cut him to the heart. You see, he was sixteen years in that theater—longer than I. I was only fourteen years with them. He finished the letter. He couldn't speak. He was still—like death.

Then I took him in my arms, and I held him tight and kissed him.

"Paul, Paul," I said, "never mind, for I will now give you the *good* news—the greatest news you can imagine. I am signed for America."

"What?" he said. "What, what do you say?"

"I am signed for America, Paul, and the Metropolitan Opera House."

"America—America. Thank God! But"—he cried—"what shall we do with the children?"

Poor Schumann—he was as bad as I was about the children. They always came first. You see, George was not born yet. He was not even thought of. But I said:

"Don't trouble about the children. We will manage. We must trust in our Fate, for I know it is good Fate that is taking me to America. Your mother can come here to live with them and Mina" (she was my maid), "she is so faithful. She loves the children. Little Charlotte, too, is growing up. She can help the others. They can all live here, and you and I will go to America alone."

"But what shall I do there? I can do nothing in America!"

But I was ready for him. I was ready for anything then. I was so happy over the new contract.

"Don't worry," I said. "I'll write Grau, and I will beg him to take you—"

"Beg him!" cried Schumann. "You would beg for me? Never! Never!"

"Now, Paul, don't be stupid," I told him. "You are a wonderful stage director. He must have need for such a man. I am sure you work for him."

And this was oil on the troubled waters. So I sent right away a letter to Grau, and I begged him to engage Schumann. I was to have $10,000, and asked him if he would be so good as to engage Schumann as stage director or something, and take $3,000 off my pay for him. I explained the whole situation to Grau, and that dear, kind man did what I wanted, and Schumann was engaged for a special stage manager. So everything worked beautifully.

Schumann's mother came to take care of the children, and all was well. But again, like always in my life, came a surprise—to expect a new baby.

"Now what will we do?" cried Schumann. "How can we go to America now?"

"Oh, don't worry," I said. "Everything will be all right. What is another baby? We have had many. What could happen?"

Schumann was ill, you see, and it troubled him very much that this upset was to come at the beginning of

MAURICE GRAU, MANAGER OF THE METROPOLITAN OPERA COMPANY IN THE NINETIES

a new career, so I had that to do, too, to cheer him up and encourage him.

I went right on singing as usual that summer at the Opera in Berlin. I had already sung in London for two seasons, but I will tell you of that later on.

And then came the hard moment of farewell to the children, to my home, and to my country, and I came to America.

It is a funny thing now when I think how stupid I was. I believed that I should see Indians and elephants and God knows what in your great country. Everybody had a different story to tell me, and of course nobody knew anything. They told me about the doctors—that they were so bad, only a few, that there were no mid-wives or anything there. And poor Schumann kept saying:

"What will we do? What will we do, Tini?"

I said: "Don't be foolish, Paul. That is only talk in the theater. They tell me these things just to scare me. And maybe they are a little jealous, too."

I could not resist saying that. And so it was we sailed for America.

It was a terrible voyage. I was sick, of course. I sailed from Germany, and we picked up Mr. Grau and a lot of other singers at Southampton—singers from all over Europe. The whole of the opera company

came on our ship. I was very lucky at this time, because the directors of the steamship line knew me, so that I had the best cabin. But, even so, I had to sleep in the upper berth, and Schumann, like all good German husbands, had the lower one! The head of the family! Germany still ruled, you see, even though I was on my way to the land of freedom!

The minute Grau came on board, we had a talk. I loved him the minute I set eyes on him—he was so, so good to me—so gay. He always has something to joke about. Then, while we were talking, suddenly he looked at me—and took in my situation. He stopped short and cried:

"Why, what is this? What is this I see? What has happened, Heink? You are expecting a baby? Oh, Heink, this is terrible! You sign a contract with me to make a big success in the greatest Opera House in the world, and here you come like this? What shall we do? We are ruined! You can not sing if you have a baby now."

"Oh, nonsense," I said. "What do you know about it? You know nothing about babies. I have had them many a time. I shall sing. You shall see. I shall make a grand success for you. This baby is nothing."

"But," he cried, "I never heard of such a thing. A great prima donna and a baby coming! You can not

make your début. I hear you have already six children at home. Why didn't you tell me this before, Heink?"

"How could I tell you before I knew it?" I said. "I did tell you in Germany long ago that my children always came first."

So we started to quarrel. We talked in German, of course, because I didn't know a word of English. We argued for a long time, and then poor Grau just gave it up. He had to. There was nothing else to be done then.

Well, we arrived in New York. I was to sing in Chicago first. I felt very sick. I thought of my début. I began to be scared, too, for the first time. It was a terrible ordeal to face, I tell you. Here it was the first of November, and the baby was coming in December. Then Schumann was sick again. I was desperate. I had all kinds of terrible thoughts. What if I should die? And Schumann of no use—and seven children to care for! I began to have again my old worries—and it was very bad for me.

But already I liked the United States. From the first moment I was crazy for it, in spite of all my worrying. It was a new world for me.

And now came the great ordeal, my first part, *Ortrud* in "Lohengrin." My début was in Chicago, November 7, 1898, and the very night before, I went

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS ORTRUD IN LOHENGRIN

all to pieces—which was unusual for me. I was at a little German restaurant with Schumann, a few blocks from the hotel, and I said,

"Schumann, I am so frightened, I can not walk."

He said: "What, Tini! You must walk! You must! Tomorrow is the great day. You must not give up now."

We left the restaurant somehow, and I got to the hotel. When I came home, I felt like dying, and Schumann began to scold.

"This is terrible," he said. "Here you are crying—you are miserable. If you feel like this, we will stop now. We will go back to Germany at once."

"Oh," I said, "Paul, I didn't realize all it would mean."

And then he scolded and stormed, and I got a little mad, too, which I suppose was a good thing, for I stopped crying.

The next night was the performance. I don't know how I dressed myself. All I know is that somehow, as always, the old curtain went up, and I stood there in front of the audience!

If you remember, *Ortrud* in that part does not sit down, and when the curtain went up, I stood there in profile, so, with my arms folded. There I stood, and right away the audience began to applaud. It gave me

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS ORTRUD IN LOHENGRIN

courage. Of course, it was because of my début, for I was by that time known in the United States only by reputation. Such applause! I can hear it to my last day. I didn't move. Then I sang, I acted, and—forgot myself. After the first few minutes my voice rang out just like it always did, and I knew all was well. We were called and called and called, after that first act. That was a great moment in my life.

Then came the second act. It was tremendous—a wonderful part it is, for which I have a special interpretation. It is a part I love. Well, again the curtain comes down. Such yelling and shouting and whistling you never heard. The orchestra had to stop. It was a great night! It was my night, I tell you, and my colleagues—dear old Plançon was there, and the de Reszkes. They stood in the wings, watching, because they knew, in four weeks after, there would be a little baby born. They were all anxious and worried.

"What will happen? Can she go through this? Can she kneel down and make her prayer?"

Well, she could! And she did, thank God! somehow.

But when it was over, that darling Plançon came, and he kissed me and hugged me, and they all told me how wonderful it was. I said, "Thank God—and there is no time for kissing," and I rushed to the dress-

ing-room to make the change for the last act. I felt a little shaky in the knees, but *Ach,* what did it matter? Everything was a success. The opera was saved. Mr. Grau could not scold now any more about the new baby. I was a success!

For twenty times that curtain rang up. Such generous American applause! When I finally got to my dressing-room, I just broke down. I got hysterical for the first time. Then they all came rushing in—newspaper reporters, critics, singers, everybody. And Mrs. Grau herself, and Mr. Grau—who was just crazy with excitement. Mrs. Grau came and undressed me—loosened everything up, because of course I had on very tight corsets and everything heavy. I will never forget what she said to me at that moment:

"Dear Heink, don't cry. Don't cry, it will make you sick. It is all over. You are a great, great success."

And Grau—well, dear old Grau, he just came to me and said: "Heink-e, you are a wonder! A wonder! Baby or no baby, you are a wonder, Heink-e!" He began then to call me Heink-e—that was his pet name for me.

Of course, the next day there were headlines in all the papers, and the new future seemed sure. It was the beginning of what I shall always think the greatest part of my career. I sang twice in the opera in Chicago

after that, and we stayed the whole month there. Then Grau decided that for the New York début we must wait until the baby was born.

"Take a rest, now, Heink-e," he said. "You deserve it."

And so it was that I took a little rest.

I used to sit in the hotel in Chicago and look out on the lake—so homesick I was for my children. And one day, as I sat there crying for them, there came a knock at the door. I said, "Come in." The door opens, and in steps—who do you think? Mina! My old servant, Mina—from Hamburg! Poor, dear Mina—there she stood! I looked at her as though I was seeing a ghost. I couldn't believe my eyes. I screamed:

"Mina—Mina. Is it you? What has happened? Are my children dead? What has brought you here to America?"

"No, no, Frau Heink," she said, "nothing has happened. Nothing, God be praised! You are well, and I see you again. I knew of the baby coming, and I thought you must have some one with you at this time from your old home." And she began to cry.

"But, Mina, how did you think of coming here?" I asked. "How did you ever find me here? And how did they let you come away from Hamburg?"

"*Ach,*" she said, "they didn't know. I didn't tell

them. They wouldn't let me go. But there was plenty at home to take care of the children. Charlotte is a big girl, and she watches over little Marie. But you are alone, in a new country, and Mr. Schumann a sick man—nobody to do for you. So I said to myself, 'Now I go anyway to my Frau Schumann-Heink'—and I just ran away."

Well, I just looked at her. "But, Mina," I cried, "how did you ever find your way to New York, all alone, over that great ocean?"

Then she told me how she came, second-class, and when she got off the boat, looked around for some one who spoke German. She didn't know a word of English, of course. So when she heard a big man on the dock speaking German, she ran to him and said,

"Please, please, sir, where is my Schumann-Heink?"

And can you believe it? By another stroke of good fate, the man she spoke to was the porter at the Belvedere Hotel, where I stayed when I first landed in New York.

Mina said he just stared at her and then said:

"*Yah!* of course, I know your Schumann-Heink. She stayed at our hotel, but she is now in Chicago, and she has made a great success there, too."

Then Mina said, "And why not? My Schumann-

Heink couldn't have anything but a big success."

She was so proud of me, poor Mina!

Well, the porter bought her ticket and put her on the train for Chicago. There was a beautiful-looking woman on this train, a singer—and who do you think it was? My old friend Nordica and her accompanist. Mina said the porter spoke to Nordica, who told Mina not to worry—that she would take care of her and send her to me—and so it was that my old faithful Mina came to help me.

Well, right after that we went back to New York, to the Belvedere Hotel. And now comes the day that blessed darling baby—who made so much trouble for dear old Grau and the rest of us—was born.

I didn't feel well that morning, and I said to Mina:

"Now, we will take a walk (I was stubborn as a mule, of course). We will go to Central Park."

Well, a walk from Eighteenth Street to Central Park is something!

When we got to the Park, Mina said: "*Ach, Gnaedige Frau,* you don't look well. We must hurry home quick."

"Nonsense!" I said: "I am all right." But Mina wouldn't listen to me, so back to the hotel we went. Then it was that I had my first glimpse of an American doctor, whom Schumann had called right away.

MINA, THE FAITHFUL MAID, WITH GEORGE WASHINGTON SCHUMANN RIGHT AFTER HIS BIRTH

It was a great comfort to me to see that he was not a wild Indian! You know, my colleagues in Hamburg had frightened me, saying there were no good doctors in America and that the population was mostly wild Indians.

So here my blessed baby was born, and almost before I knew it, the doctor, with a nice smile on his face, was bending over me, saying, "Well, well! My congratulations, Frau Schumann-Heink, to you and to little George Washington."

I didn't know what he was saying. I didn't understand.

"What, what?" I said. I didn't know what he meant.

"Yes, it is a boy, your baby, a fine little American boy. And you can not show your gratitude to America better than by calling him George Washington. Name him after the Father of these great United States."

A few days later came the German Consul-General, and I told him about it, he said:

"You can not call this baby 'George Washington.' That is against the German law."

"You old fool!" Schumann said, "it is not against the American law. We are in America now. He is not registered, this baby, and he is to be named George

Washington. That's what we'll call him. That's settled!"

And George Washington Schumann he was christened. I couldn't have given him a better name, now could I?

PART III

III

I THINK I told you that from the very first I liked America. It really seemed another home-coming to me. I don't know why, but I felt I had a place here. You see, for some time I'd thought a good deal about America and its opportunities—not only for my singing, but for the children. No military duty for them, and freedom from many things that I began to realize. Then, too, I'm naturally a regular old tramp—just like my dear father in that way—a soldier. A soldier of Fortune. That's what every artist is, if the truth be told. Yes, I liked change and adventure. It was in the blood, I suppose, for generations and generations. So from the very beginning I loved your great and generous country.

Those were busy years in America. My good début in Chicago was followed by appearances in New York, where my success was as great. All went well, and Grau was always my true friend during these first years with the Metropolitan.

And now while we speak of it I will tell you that the first operas I sang at the Metropolitan were *Ortrud* in "Lohengrin"—that was the first. Then there was *Erda* in "Rheingold" and "Siegfried"; *Fricka* in

"*Walküre*"; *Magdalena* in "*Die Meistersinger*"; *Brangaene* in "Tristan"; *Mary* in the "Flying Dutchman"; *Mercellina* in the "Marriage of Figaro."

Your opera season in New York is during the winter months, which left me free to sing in London for the "season," which is in the summer, beginning in May. It was during my first years in America that I returned to sing again in London and also in Bayreuth, which played a great part in my career.

I sang in London at the Covent Garden opera, the Wagner Cycle, and many other parts. I had first gone to London with Pollini in my Hamburg days, when he took his whole corps of German Wagner singers to London. We were all engaged for the opera season there. Then, too, I was already known to the English people, because I had sung in Kroll and other places, and as the English are always traveling about, I didn't come to London quite unknown. It was at Kroll that I first met your great American singer, Lillian Nordica.

Yes, in the early days, we all went to London with Pollini and his whole company. I didn't know anything of hotels there, of course. I only knew I had 700 shillings a week from the last week in June to the 24th of July. I, who had been getting only a few hundred marks a month, to get 700 shillings a week!

It was a fortune! But, as usual, I was economical. You can not teach an old dog new tricks, you know, so I went to a little boarding house and paid only 12 shillings a week. I had one small room, but I didn't mind where I lived or anything else, that first season in London.

And now comes a funny thing. I made a sensation in *Erda*. It was a tremendous success, and all the people in high society wanted to meet me personally. But nobody knew where I lived, and I wouldn't tell. All my colleagues came and asked me—Nordica, de Reszke, Plançon, and so on, but I wouldn't tell, much as I cared for them. I might as well say right now that Jean de Reszke and Plançon played a big part in my life. Jean de Reszke, until the end of his days, was always my friend in every way. He really loved my voice, and I may tell you that he was my greatest admirer. When we sang together in the operas, our relations were always of the highest. He was a great, great singer. What a genius! It was in London I first met him.

Well, my boarding house was in Great Russell Street, opposite the big museum, and I lived there very peacefully (and stupidly, I suppose) and put up with the rotten meals and everything else that I didn't like, and got through with my first season. Later on I

did meet a lot of society people, but I always used to make some excuse so as not to go to their dinners and parties, and Nordica would scold me for this and say it was a mistake. She was always a kind, helpful friend. She told me how all these grand titled people used to try to find out where I was living.

I had a terrible experience one night when a drunken sailor broke into the boarding house and shoved himself into my room. After that I put my washstand up against the door and piled everything on top of it. I was frightened, I tell you—which sounds funny for a mother and a prima donna! But anyway, I decided then that was no place for me to stay, and I told Nordica about my experience.

"Well," she said, "it serves you right. Why do you live in such a place. We must do something for you.

"Ernestine," she said, "it is so stupid of you to go on like this. It is high time you met some of these people who want to know you. I will give a dinner for you at my house, and you shall sing afterward."

And so it was arranged, and I was to be introduced to society.

Well, the night came, and I took a hansom and drove to her beautiful house in Regent Park. But when I got there and stepped out, I had the shock of my life! I heard talking and laughing inside, and when I

rang the bell, the high and mighty butler who opened the door—well, he just stared at me! I had no evening dress at this time. I had nothing but an ordinary dress on and a plain old coat.

The butler glared at me, "What do you want?" he said.

I didn't speak any English, so I said in German, "I want to see Madame Nordica."

But he refused to let me in, and I could not make him understand. He wouldn't let me pass!

Well, luckily, Nordica's French maid heard the talking and came to the rescue. It seems I was very late, and Nordica was getting nervous. When she saw me, she rushed out into the hall and caught hold of me.

"Heavens, Ernestine, at last you are here! But"—she stopped short—"what's this? No evening dress on? Are you mad? Why—you simply *can not* come in, in that old dress. The Duke So-and-So and the Duchess This-and-That are all here! Every one is expecting you. You are a sight—a sight!"

"But," I said, "it can't be helped. I have no evening dress. No Sir!"

I had only a concert dress, but I was so economical even then that I would not wear it to her dinner.

Well, Nordica looked at me—she threw up her

hands! Then she burst out laughing and said something to her maid. Then she turned to me and whispered:

"For Heaven's sake, Ernestine, go with my maid upstairs, quick, before any one sees you, and she'll fix you up and make you look decent."

It didn't take very long until I was perfectly dressed. Her maid was French and knew her business. There I was, beautifully "turned out," with pearls and earrings and a necklace and things stuck in my hair from Nordica's jewel-box. It was a fine black dress I had on. I was not so fat at this time, so it fitted me very well. But I don't mind telling you that Nordica's slippers were too large. You know, I really have very small feet—a characteristic of Austrian women. Well, we stuck something in the toes of the slippers, and I wore them. The maid had arranged my hair in big, thick braids. You know, I always had nice hair from the beginning, and—well, I didn't know myself. I was fine!

Yes, the maid dressed me up, and she dressed me down, and powdered me and painted me and hung things on me, and got me ready, and down I came into the drawing-room, where all the grand guests were waiting. When Nordica saw me, she really opened her eyes wide, I tell you, and whispered:

"Nobody would know you, Ernestine. How do you feel now in all those fine clothes?"

"Well," I answered, "I'm a good actress—it's just another part, anyway—I'm beginning to feel as if they were mine. I can get through with this, all right, and pretend I really wear elegant clothes all the time. Don't worry; I won't disgrace you and your grand duchesses!"

We laughed, and of course nobody else caught on to the joke.

We had a beautiful dinner. I sang for them afterward, and it was a sensation. Nordica was delighted. Yes, it was a grand dinner and such wonderful guests —princes and dukes, all the people in high society, and, of course, everything was tip-top. Nordica was very generous always—a fine hostess. She gave many great dinner parties and was a great favorite with the English aristocracy.

Well, it was a great success, as I said before, and I didn't disgrace her with my clothes, at any rate. I sang with Doehme, her husband, Hungarian songs, and everybody was quite mad about them. When it was all over, I trotted back in the old hansom cab to my room in Great Russell Street. But I learned a lesson that night, and determined that the next time I came to London, I'd live in better quarters. This was the

beginning of many parties with Nordica and other people—my début, as we say—in high society.

The Hamburg days were devoted entirely to my singing and my children, but, of course, on these trips to London I was "on my own," as you say in America. The real change in my family life came when I first went to America. But even the opera, and all my work there, could never make up for the absence of my family. I was always hungry for them. I remember, when I came back to Germany the first year from America, and we all were together again. I was so happy. I haven't the words to tell you how I felt. I sat in my usual place at the table, my little Ferdinand next to me. The little fellow came and looked up into my face, snuggled up close to me, and said:

"Is your name Mama? Is it?—is it?"

You know, if he had stuck a knife into my heart, it would not have hurt so much as that—"Is your name Mama?" *Ach!* for a moment I could not speak a word.

It was on this first trip back to Germany that I brought little George Washington—my American baby, I called him then. He was sick at that time, and it happened that on the same boat was Richard Croker, your big Tammany politician. He used to sit on

the deck every day and help me to take care of the baby, playing with him and so on. It seemed to amuse him, and that's the way we became acquainted. Mr. Croker tried so hard to talk to me, but he couldn't speak German, and I couldn't speak English very well, so we didn't get on very fast. No, I didn't understand English well even then—my English started much later, when I began singing in "Love's Lottery." I never really learned the language properly, I'm ashamed to say; I just picked it up. I never learned to read it or write it, but I can do both now, except some high-brow words which I have to look up in the dictionary!

Well, right after my arrival in Europe, I started the London season. I knew there had to be a change in my way of living this time—Nordica's party had settled that!

One of my colleagues told me of a fine house in Regent Park. "Of course," she said, "it is expensive."

Well, for once, I said: "I can't help it. I have to live well this time. That's settled. I'll go there."

I had made some money by now and had a little better position. So there I went. I had a fine, big room, and it was all very pleasant and comfortable.

Meanwhile I had been meeting more people, and among them I mustn't forget the five bachelors who

lived at Whitehall Court. There my really beautiful life in London started. It was a little German colony planted right in England. One of these men was Franz Deutch—a banker and brother-in-law of Otto Kahn. The others were his friends, all Jews, of course, and very rich. One of these men had the honor of having the Prince of Wales as his guest often. There they played baccarat, and I was often invited. When they had their great dinners, the Prince of Wales would come later always, for the playing. Of course, I was not the only lady at these parties, but these gentlemen were a little clique by themselves—Bohemians, in a sense. You know, the Prince of Wales was not always with aristocrats, he was very democratic in his tastes. In London I met all kinds of people, and was invited by the real aristocrats, and sang in many concerts at different houses. I didn't know half the time who they were, and I have even forgotten the names by now. It was nothing in my young life then, who it was. People invited me, and I just went and enjoyed myself. There is one thing, though, that I do remember all about, and that was when we sang for Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle. We sang the first and last acts of "Lohengrin"—Jean de Reszke, Nordica, Edouard de Reszke, Bispham, and myself. It was a wonderful occasion.

They built a regular stage in the castle, and our dressing-rooms were those beautiful salons. I had my dressing-table—where I made up—in a room where there was an ivory throne—and such marvelous things. Windsor Castle is a wonderful place and perfectly tremendous. Nordica's dressing-room was in another great room, too, nearly as big as the ground floor of the Waldorf-Astoria. We gave a regular performance, with full orchestra and chorus—a gala occasion. It was a strictly social function. All the nobility and great aristocracy were invited. After the performance there was a splendid supper, and the Duke of Connaught served me, I remember. But just before this came the reception, when we were all presented to Queen Victoria.

First came Mr. Grau; after him, Jean de Reszke. He came in his costume as *Lohengrin,* with his wig and everything, and looked wonderful. Then came David Bispham, then Nordica. It was then she made her low bow to the Queen, but forgot to kiss her hand—at least she said she did! Then I came and made my three low bows to the Queen. I was the only one who knew real court etiquette, and this made the Princess of Wales look at me and watch me in surprise. Years afterward she spoke of it, as I'll tell you later.

I remember I had on my German orders and decora-

tions and looked very grand, too. I put them on for this great occasion. When I made my low bows, the old Queen bent forward. She had on huge eyeglasses with big thick rims. That was the first time I had ever seen those big-rimmed glasses. She looked at me, as I bent my knee and kissed her finger-tips.

"You dear, dear child," she said, "I like you. I have already seen you on the stage and love your voice."

She spoke in German to me, and I looked at her and answered back a few grateful words in German, of course, for I was deeply touched.

Then she took my face in her little old hands and held it a second. My bow was so low, you know, she could easily do it, and it looked as if I knelt to her—that must have been the impression it made. Then I moved back, bowing, very slowly.

There was a little enclosure, and they all sat around it, but she sat alone in the center, in a beautiful great chair like a throne. She sat alone. This was the only time I ever saw Queen Victoria, and I shall always remember how she looked sitting there—so old, so small, but so powerful. As I passed out, there was the Princess of Wales looking at me, and she sort of winked—that is, if a Princess can wink at an opera

singer! I didn't know at the moment just who she was, when she said to me,

"And where did you learn your beautiful low bows?"

Inside I was a bit indignant, but I answered very proudly: "I am the daughter of an Austrian army officer. We are taught how to bow *properly* when we meet a King and a Queen."

She laughed very charmingly and said, "Oh, you are delightful!"

Well, by this time it was already one o'clock, and I was very hungry, I tell you, after all that singing and bowing and scraping, so we went down to the dining-room, and there we had supper. Everything looked and tasted fine. They had champagne flowing like water, of course, and, I remember well, *schnitzel* (which I love), and green peas. They certainly had a magnificent supper for us. We were in a side room, and the grand dukes and princes and princesses, etc., were in another big room, where there was also a buffet. As I was eating away, I felt some one watching me, and sure enough, in a few minutes in comes a grand, gold-bedecked lackey. He spoke to the Court gentleman who was our host, who came to me immediately and said:

"The Duke of Connaught wishes to see you. Please, Madame, come at once."

I turned to Nordica and said: "*Ach!* This is terrible! I am so hungry. I don't want to talk to a Duke. I don't want to leave my good *schnitzel* and green peas!"

But Nordica said: "For heaven's sake, go, Ernestine. Don't say such a thing. Go quickly. You *have* to go!"

So, of course, I went. But I went with such a face!

The Duke of Connaught, when he saw my expression, said: "I am awfully sorry to disturb you. But never mind, you can get the same good things to eat in here as they have in the other room!"And then directly he brought me something himself.

"What?" I said. "No knife or fork? How shall I eat?"

Of course, he laughed, for he was very nice and democratic as he could be, and said, "You are very cross with me."

I said, "No, I am not exactly cross, but I am afraid, Your Highness, that they will take away my good *schnitzel* in the other room!"

That broke the ice between us, and then he gave an order, and a plateful of everything was brought me. It was piled high, and every one looked horrified.

"Here," he said, "I will hold your plate while you eat your beloved *schnitzel!*"

"*Ach!*" I cried. "Your Highness, this will never do! Thank you very much, but I cannot let you hold my plate."

"But," he said, "I insist. And I want to tell you now that you are the most graceful thing I've ever seen in my life."

"*Ach!*" I said between mouthfuls. "How so?"

"Oh, those wonderful bows that you make!" he said. "Nordica is a wonderful woman, and a beautiful singer, but she can not make such bows as yours!"

"Well," I said, "that is because she is American raised, and they don't do that in America."

He laughed and said: "No, there are no Kings or Queens in America. Tell me, who is your father?"

So I told him my father was a major in the Austrian army, and he said: "Ah, now I understand. You have something of the soldier in you—the way you walk. But even if you do walk like a soldier, your bows are mighty graceful."

Of course, I was very happy at that.

That was the end of the interview. He bowed me out and said he hoped to see me again.

I hurried back, but alas! my *schnitzel* was gone, just as I knew it would be. But I didn't really care

then—I had lost all appetite for it anyway, after my heaping plateful served by the Duke of Connaught.

I mustn't forget to tell you that each one of us, as we passed the Prince of Wales, who stood with his Court gentlemen about him, was handed a present. The ladies had beautiful brooches—the gentlemen, stick pins. Jean de Reszke also got the Order of the Victoria Cross, second class. I had a wonderful brooch, and Nordica the same. This all happened during my Covent Garden season. It was also the first year after I came to America.

It was during my first return to London, after the New York season, that I did an almost unheard of thing. I broke my contract with the Covent Garden opera. I had already sung one Wagner Cycle, and the second Cycle was just beginning. I was dressing to go on the stage that night, when a telegram came from my home in Germany, saying:

"Your baby is dying—come immediately."

I was frantic at this news. You can imagine what it meant to me. I was already dressed for my part—wig, sandals and everything. My first thought was to rush that minute from the opera house, but of course, that could not be done, so I went through my part. Then I tore off my costume, got into my clothes, and rushed for the station without even stop-

ping to take the paint off my face—I did not stop to explain anything to the people at the opera either. I ran to the Victoria station for the train, and I went by the quickest way. I simply said nothing, not even to dear old Grau. I ran away—I ran to my sick baby.

Of course, that broke my contract, but I didn't think of that or anything else at the time—and it wouldn't have made any difference if I had. It was pretty hard on Grau. He was furious at first, but was fine when he understood. He was wonderful to me afterward about it. He said, "I am awfully sorry, Heink-e, terribly disappointed, for you have lost London—forever. You can never come back. But I understand—Heink-e—I understand."

Well, I got home and found the baby dying—a tiny flame, just ready to blow out. But I worked the magic somehow and saved his life. I soon got him into good condition again, thank God, for on the fifteenth of June I was obliged to be in Bayreuth. So I was pushed both ways. Well, anyway, I saved my little George and then went on to Bayreuth, leaving the children with Schumann and old, faithful Mina.

Of course, London was over for me, and I felt terribly. I'd made wonderful friends there—wonderful friends among my colleagues in the opera. There is a great deal to say about them, particularly Nordica

and Jean de Reszke. They were great artists and wonderful friends to me, and I hold them always in my memory. I shall tell you some beautiful things about them later on.

And now we come to Bayreuth, the shrine of Richard Wagner, and the Mecca then of the whole musical world. There is so much to tell about this period and the great Cosima Wagner, the widow of "The Master," as he was called.

I had already sung in Bayreuth, you remember, several seasons before I came to America. My first opportunity for the great honor of singing there came in this way. From there, as from other opera houses, they sent for artists from all over Europe. At that time it was Professor Kniese that was sent from Bayreuth. He was tutor for the singers when they first went there. He taught them the *tradition* of the Bayreuth school. All this was very important, because Bayreuth was one of the greatest assets for every singer, not only for advertising, but for their reputation as an artist.

It was in 1896 that the whole Ring ("Rheingold," "Valkyrie," "Siegfried," and "*Götterdämmerung*") was given for the first time after it was done by Richard Wagner. Professor Kniese came to Hamburg in 1895 and heard me sing in the opera there—in

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS WALTRAUTE IN GOETTERDAEMMERUNG, ONE OF HER GREATEST RÔLES

"Orpheus," by Gluck. This is one of my very best parts and shows the voice to wonderful advantage. He saw at once that I knew the *classic style,* that is so different from the general run of opera singers. He was delighted with my voice, and came to me afterward and said he would also like to hear me sing something of Wagner's. He asked me what rôles I knew. I told him I had already sung "*Die Meistersinger,*" "Valkyrie," and I'd done *Ortrud,* in "Lohengrin," too.

"Well," he said, "we want you for the Ring. Can you come to Bayreuth and sing for Frau Wagner? So far as I am concerned, I'm very enthusiastic about you, but Frau Wagner must hear you, too."

So I went to sing for Cosima Wagner. I sang *Waltraute* and *Erda.* I was in wonderful voice that time —and I am proud all the days of my life that Cosima Wagner liked me at once and wanted me for Bayreuth. The conductors, Levy and Hans Richter, were also there for the trial. There was a great pack of them—Siegfried Wagner, the son, and the daughters, too, of Cosima Wagner, and Professor Kniese, who played for me. It was then settled that I was to sing in Bayreuth the next summer. You can imagine without any more words of mine what this meant. I had reached one of the highest pinnacles of my career.

At this time, you must know, Richard Wagner was

dead. He died in 1883. He was only seventy years old, but had lived long enough to have the world recognize his genius and his marvelous music, which had been ridiculed and misunderstood by the whole world in the beginning. Although he conducted his operas himself very frequently, he was not a great conductor. He could not interpret his own work as an orchestra leader, strange as that may seem. It was not his forte. He did it, of course, at Bayreuth and in Paris particularly—all over Europe, in fact—but it was Hans Richter who interpreted the Wagner operas so splendidly. Hans Richter and Levy, too, were magnificent conductors; but Richter was a wonder—he was the mainstay at Bayreuth. There were other conductors also, all of them fine, but he was, in my opinion, the greatest of them all. And so it was that Bayreuth had been built up and was a shrine, and Wagner the idol of his countrymen, and his works proclaimed throughout the whole musical world at the time of his death.

After Wagner's death, Bayreuth went on as usual, but, as always happens when the head is gone, a change began to take place. While it didn't exactly go to pieces, somehow or other it was going down and not the success it had been. This went on for several seasons until the directors (particularly the financial backers) felt that something must be done. It must

be bolstered up somehow, or it would cease to be the great institution it had been in Wagner's life. The real fact was that the business was running down, so banker Gross, who had the interests of the Wagner family close at heart, got them and all the directors together and said:

"Now, we must face the truth. We are at a desperate moment. There is only one hope in view—only one—if we are to keep up the grandeur and tradition of Bayreuth, and that is to get Cosima Wagner herself to take it in hand and carry on the work of the Master, as only she can do it."

They all realized what a great woman she was—what an artist and musician. You know, she was the daughter of the great Franz Liszt and the wife of that genius, von Bülow, before she married Wagner. They knew what a tremendous help she had always been to Wagner himself—how she had advised and stood back of him in everything—and so they turned to her at this critical time, when everything was going down, dying out.

They talked to her about it; they begged her.

At first she revolted at the idea and said: "No, it is impossible, I can not do it—I can not."

"But you can not desert us now," they implored her. "The life work of your husband, the dream of

the Master, is on the point of being destroyed, if you do not yourself take the whole thing into your own hands. *You* can do it," they said. "No one else can restore the glory of Bayreuth."

That settled it. She took hold, and the way she took hold was simply a wonder.

So it was she began in 1896 to take it in hand, and I had the great happiness and privilege to be there when she started. She was a wonderful woman—most highly educated. She was like a queen—and such a musician!—taught by Liszt, her father, and by von Bülow, her first husband. She had a most imposing appearance.

She was very, very tall and always wore a black dress—very long it was. She was slender and had most beautiful hands. She was so tall that she always bent forward when she spoke to any one. She was very near-sighted, and I remember she always wore something on her head to shield her eyes. She was nearly seventy years old then, but she showed us the voice and the walk of the Valkyrie—and how she showed that! Oh! how much I learned from her! Now *Waltraute* is one of my greatest parts. No, it is not a big part, but I made a special thing of it, nevertheless. I interpreted this in a new—in a big way. I made some-

LILLI LEHMANN, GREAT GERMAN OPERA SINGER

thing important of it, and ever since I did it in 1896, the rôle has been done in that manner in every theater where there is a *real Waltraute*. It has become tradition, as we say, and I may add that I am naturally very proud of it. Yes, I learned something from Cosima Wagner every time I sang at Bayreuth.

She had an *instinctive* knowledge of acting, and she was the greatest stage manager I ever knew. She had absolute authority, and only once that I know of was it overruled. I remember the time—the fight she had with Lilli Lehmann.

Of course, the whole world knows Lilli Lehmann was one of the greatest artists of her day, and she was simply tremendous in the Wagner rôles, but Lilli Lehmann was Lilli Lehmann! Her early training had been in the Italian school, and we were in Bayreuth, where everything was done according to *tradition—tradition* came first; and so it was when she sang *Brünnhilde,* one of the *traditions* is that *Brünnhilde* must have brown hair. But no, Lehmann put on a bright red wig—that's what she did!

Cosima Wagner was horrified—furious. The red wig was impossible! "You may have a brown wig or a black wig," she said, "but a red wig, never—never! never!"

But as I have already told you, Lehmann in-

sisted; she put on the red wig. I may say she was the only person who ever defied Cosima Wagner—and that is something, I can tell you. But it only happened once.

She was a great artist, nevertheless. And she did a big thing that will go down in musical history. Yes, it was Lilli Lehmann who started the Salzburg Festivals.

She did this in spite against Bayreuth, and many people think it did a lot of damage to Bayreuth. This all happened after her break with Cosima Wagner and Bayreuth. In Vienna they took her in with open arms, and some people say it was in gratitude to Austria that she started the Festivals. She had much help in the beginning for every artist was ready to go with her, and she had, best of all, as director Richard Strauss himself.

They started on a very small scale and had a great success, and now the whole musical world is interested, and the Salzburg Festivals have become famous to all music lovers and artists. So Lilli Lehmann was really the creator of the Mozart Festivals, and spends her summers there now, I believe, teaching.

But to return to Cosima Wagner and the old Bayreuth days.

Cosima knew everything—all the inside things so important about stage management. She had worked

SCHUMANN-HEINK IN BAYREUTH

so much with Wagner himself. You could never speak to her of Wagner except as "the Master"—she was so full of reverence and idealism. And such talents for this work! In my opinion, Wagner himself could never have done what Cosima did. She was always absolutely absorbed in the rehearsals—it was all so sacred to her. Why, when we sang the last chorus in "The Meistersingers" (which is like a prayer), she always stood up. Yes, she stood through it all. I can never hope to tell you what an inspiration she was to all of us.

I remember many things that happened to me at rehearsal. Once I was to sing *Waltraute,* and had to wear a great, iron breast-plate—real iron, too. It was very heavy, with big, long chains. Also I had huge bracelets of iron on my arms, like big rings. Every time I moved my arms, it hurt me terribly, because they were too tight and squeezed my flesh. It hurt me so that my arms started to bleed. After the first rehearsal I went to Cosima and said:

"Oh, Frau Meisterin [as we called her], I can not stand this—these iron bracelets—they hurt me so. It must be changed. I can not go on with it! I can not sing!"

She looked at me very hard, straight in the eyes, and said, "I am sure it doesn't hurt you *too* much!"

I was so humble then before her that everything she said was law to me, but I suppose she saw the agony in my face, for she looked at me again, and then said, "Wait: I will try it and see for myself."

And then and there she put the whole thing on her own arms and started to take the great spear and make the gestures. She saw then that it was as I said, too heavy. She was very just and very kind; she understood. She said:

"Yes, you are right, Heink. Some of these things will have to be left off. You will not look so well—it will make a great difference in the picture—but that can't be helped. You must not be hurt. You can not sing well under such conditions."

She was always like that. She would see for herself first, but when she saw, no one could have been more understanding. And there wasn't anything that she could not show you herself. She not only understood things, but she acted them and sang them. Once at rehearsal, in "The Meistersingers," when they all danced about the stage, she cried:

"No, no, that is not *right!*"

It was a difficult dance, because the boys take on their hips the girls, and the girls take the boys by the shoulder—I can not explain it except to say that it is a difficult dance. They couldn't get it right, and

Cosima Wagner ran on to the stage and showed them herself, and danced that dance perfectly, old as she was. And I tell you it was something to see as well as something to do. They understood then.

Yes, she could do everything herself. When any one said, "I don't know how," or "I cannot do it—it is wrong," she would say, "Let *me* try." Then she found exactly whether it could or could not be done that way. Yes, a great woman she was—one of the greatest of her time.

But how priceless that early training in Bayreuth has been to me. What a groundwork! What a background for all the rest of my career! You had to *know* what you were doing. Everything had to be done thoroughly. The value of this training I can not speak about too often. The so-called "*tradition*" of Bayreuth extended to the very smallest detail. The Wagner tradition is not the same as the Italian opera, for instance, where you have to sing and sing and try to speak the words anyhow and nobody understands; but the Bayreuth tradition is to sing the words so that they are understood absolutely clearly. You must *pronounce every syllable*—that was Wagner's idea—so much so that they called it "sprecht" (speaking) music. If you wanted to be a big success as a Wagner singer you must be able to speak the words. There

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couldn't be a syllable even that could not be understood.

And does the art of arts "bel canto" singing, as it is called, suffer by this? In my opinion, no, for be it *forte, mezzo-forte, pianissimo,* no matter what, you can speak the words just the same—if you know how to sing. For why can't you say b and p when you sing? It's all nonsense to say you can't—of course you can. But whether you could or not, you certainly learned this at Bayreuth. Cosima would not tolerate anything else. And I may as well tell you that she it was who first taught me how to sing "*piano*"—meaning softly. She told me I must get it—the real *pianissimo,* which, I must confess, I hadn't even then accomplished. It was very difficult, as every singer knows, to get what is called the perfect pianissimo, and I often wonder I had it at all when I remember how I used to shout for my first singing teacher, who was deaf, and how I practiced so loud at home that some one thought it must be a young calf bellowing, as my mother said.

I have a funny story to illustrate that, too. It was when I was a little girl and taking my first singing lessons. We lived in the house of a rope-maker, and there was a little boy who used to turn the wheel and weave the flax back and forth. His father was our

landlord. One day, after I had taken my singing lesson, I was shouting at the top of my voice, as my teacher used to tell me. Well, right in the middle of this, up ran the rope-maker's little boy, breathless. He had in his hand a little glass with some kind of drink in it, like Jamaica ginger—something you take for the stomachache. He ran right upstairs, burst open the door, and said:

"Here, here, drink this quick!"

I said, "What do you want? What is this?"

He said, "Oh, drink it quick; my mother says you must have an awful stomachache, you are screaming so loud! She says you should drink this and then go right away quick to bed."

Of course, I was insulted and began to scold the little boy. There was a terrible rumpus, and mother came running in to see what was going on.

Mother said, "Now Tini, I don't want to say anything about your singing, but I *don't* believe your teacher ever told you to scream your head off like that, because I am afraid you will break your voice in two!"

I was terribly offended that my mother felt the same way, too. But I am afraid it didn't have much effect, because I went right on singing "to beat the band."

Yes, it was Cosima herself who first brought this lack in my singing to my attention. I had sung for her—sung at some soirée—and she said:

"Yes—yes—very nice, very lovely—but there is still one thing—a most important thing—that you haven't mastered. You can not yet sing *piano* (*pianissimo*) properly. It is not the *real* thing. It is not the perfect thing that you can make it, if you wish."

Now, I saw she was very serious about this, so I said to Schumann:

"What in Heaven's name does she mean? I can sing *pianissimo!*"

But Schumann agreed with her, and then he, too, started to criticize me, and said:

"Yes, she is right, Tini. I, too, have noticed this, but you have not realized it yourself—yet."

"Nonsense, Paul!" I cried. "Don't talk to me—show me how to do it."

Well, Schumann shook his head. "There is nothing I can show you," he replide. "This you must work out for yourself—this is only for singers to understand. Work it out for yourself before it's too late."

So I began to think about it and practiced differently—trying this way and that. To make the long story short, after six weeks I thought I had it, so when I went back to the opera in Hamburg, I began

to sing my parts a little differently—not so loud. I tried to shade some of the phrases better—but I tell you it didn't work out there, for right away the manager came rushing around to me in great excitement.

"What in the world have you done to your voice, Heink? Have you lost it? *Gott in Himmel!*"

Of course, then I had to begin to shout again in the same old way, but still it was working in my mind, and I determined to make it perfect.

We had a wonderful conductor at the time. He told me certain songs to study for this, which I did. Then, too, I used to go to the opera and listen to the coloratura soprano singers and that helped me very much. So in every possible way I worked at it and finally succeeded. The next year, when I went back to Bayreuth, I had the *real pianissimo,* at last, and, of course, immediately got the praise of Cosima Wagner.

"Ah," she said, "*now* you have it! That is fine. That is beautiful."

All this happened, as you know, after Wagner's death. While he lived, although Cosima never "butted in," as you say, she was always back of him—was in everything that was going on. At that time she had a great responsibility in looking after the social end of things, because that played a tremendous part

in the early Bayreuth days. Wagner's house (Villa Wahnfried) was presented to him by King Ludwig II of Bavaria, who was his patron and devoted admirer, and there were grand soirées and musical parties in this Villa during those early years. Cosima was like a queen receiving at those big evenings, and everybody came. It was the greatest honor to be invited. Royalty came, of course, and after the reception there would be music and then supper. It was really the most wonderful thing you can imagine. So she helped Wagner in this way, too. He didn't care much for the social end of it. He would present himself at the beginning, and then jump out of the window or sneak out the back door, and leave her with all the royal highnesses to entertain. He used to go to a little beer restaurant where he could be happy and enjoy himself with a few old cronies and artists, which is the way of most great men.

I was often invited, and sang, and was happy to help out. Literary people came, too, from all over the world—writers, musicians, painters, everybody of note. Sometimes as many as three hundred people came. When you first entered the Villa, there was a huge, beautiful music room and a balcony around it. The dining-room, too, was very handsome. There the table was set, and every one went in and helped them-

selves after the music. Back of the house was a lovely garden.

It is interesting to remember the last time I saw the great Adelina Patti it was there, at Cosima Wagner's. And I almost wished I hadn't seen her, because it was at the end of her career. Her singing days were then over, and when I saw her there she was at the breaking point. But, never mind, she was still the greatest of her time, and even then, at the end, after the voice was not there any more, Patti was still Patti. The remnants of her greatness still clung about her. You could feel her triumphs, so to say, in her atmosphere, which is always so with the great ones.

What a voice that was! And what a trill! How she did it I don't know, and nobody knows. It was a gift from God, I am sure, but sometimes that trill really lasted five minutes. It was one of the marvelous voices of a generation. And in addition she was very beautiful to look at in her early days, and a fine actress. When I saw her at Cosima Wagner's, she was made up like a doll, with her hair bleached red. Patti's last London season was in 1896, and her last performance was "*Traviata*"—one of her greatest rôles. She had a tremendously long career.

I have already told you so much about Bayreuth, I now want to say just a few words about the opera

house itself. First of all, it is the best building acoustically in the whole world, and that is saying a great deal. The next best is your Tabernacle at Salt Lake City. Bayreuth is the most perfect, and nobody knows today what was done to bring about this perfect acoustic condition. The Munich Theater, where I sang for several years, they built in exactly the same style, copied it as exactly as they could, but it is not the same as Bayreuth—far from it. The opera house at Bayreuth was specially built for the Festivals, and is on a little hill. The orchestra, you know, is out of sight; it can not be seen at all—you only hear it to perfection.

But enough of Bayreuth for the present. I could go on and on, but now—back to the United States. London was off—I had broken my contract, as you know, when I ran away to save my child's life. When I came back to New York I lived in the old Belvedere Hotel—a German hotel on Eighteenth Street. Everything went splendidly so far as my singing was concerned, until the great change at the Metropolitan Opera House, when Grau retired. In the Grau régime he stood for Music. There was no Mr. This or Mr. That, or any one who could tell him what he must do. He was the autocrat—nobody told him who should be engaged or who should not—he engaged whom he

wanted. And he made the repertoire without any interference from the conductors. He was the absolute autocrat in every way.

It was in my fourth year that he came one day and told me this terrible news. You know Maurice Grau was a prince of a man—such a gentleman—so kind to everybody. Why, when we went in for rehearsals and there would be an old scrubwoman on her knees cleaning the stage, Grau would stop, lift his hat when he passed her, and say:

"Good morning! How are you today?"

He was always considerate of everybody. We were all spoiled by him. I adored him and admired him, too. He was always just, because in the opera as elsewhere in life, people have all kinds of jealousy and meanness to contend with, gossip and story telling, and of course an opera house is always buzzing with it. I never mixed in this, and my protection was perhaps that I couldn't speak English well and couldn't speak fluently either Italian or French. I might have been as bad as the rest, if I had had these languages at my command! But I must confess that I was homesick at this time.

Then, too, Schumann who was with me did not make it very pleasant, because he was jealous—like all husbands of prima donnas—and in that last year

he was very sick, too. He really had nothing to do then at the opera, and his life was going out. It was hard on him—the ending of his long and successful career. To finish a career is the saddest thing in the world. I think of it very often now. Sometimes, even when I'm actually standing on the stage and singing, I think, "Well, maybe this will be the last time." It is mighty hard to retire with a good grace, and not overdo, or try to be young, and to go on when the day is really over.

I always think it is harder for a woman than a man, first of all, because men are the lords of creation anyway, and nobody seems to mind a few wrinkles and gray hairs in them! But the poor woman must always try to keep her youth at any cost, and that is very hard, on or off the stage. Paint and powder and all that are a nuisance, which in my case doesn't mean much, because I never could fix myself up that way, except when I sang in opera. The powder won't stay on, and I would look like the devil if it did, anyway. I thought I might have to do it this year, which is my Jubilee Year—fifty years of singing on the stage. But, thank God! I'm still going strong as I am, and my hair—that stays gray to the end—and *long!*

But to get back to Mr. Grau. I must tell you about

the end of my contract with him. He came to me and said:

"My dear Heink-e [he always called me Heink-e], "I am awfully sorry, but I must tell you something. It will hurt you, I know, as much as it hurts me—I am leaving the Metropolitan Opera forever. I'm not well enough to carry on any longer. My heart is in bad condition, and I must rest.

"No, no, now, don't start to cry," he said. "I feel badly enough without that."

"*Ach!*" I said, "Grau, I can't help it. This is a desperate thing you tell me. I can never forget this time I have had with you."

"Never mind. Never mind me, Heink-e," he said. "You will go on. Conreid is to be the manager next year, and you will have a contract with him. I will see to it that you are paid even more than I paid you. You belong to the Metropolitan, and if Conreid loses you, it will be a great loss. He *needs* you. He can't get on without you."

But I said: "No, no. I will not make a contract with this Conreid."

Then Grau said: "Listen, Heink-e, listen. Conreid is a good man. He will be a good manager."

"I don't care," I said, "if he is a good man or not! I will not sign a contract with any one else—not

yet. I can sing in concerts; I don't have to be with the Metropolitan."

But Grau said: "The Metropolitan is the Metropolitan—the greatest opera in the world. You must think twice before you refuse a contract with Conreid."

"No," I said, "no, I may be a stubborn mule, but it wouldn't be the same without you—that I know. You get well and come back, and then again you can have your old Heink-e."

He looked at me and shook his head. He saw it was no use to argue with me then.

"All right," he said, "but remember what I tell you."

Well, Conreid was in Boston, and heard me sing there in concert, and right away offered me a new contract. He really wanted me.

"No," I said. "No, I am too loyal to Mr. Grau. I can not think of the Metropolitan without him. I won't do it."

"But," he said, "Sembrich is coming. I have all the other big artists—I have contracts with them all."

"Well," I replied, "that is their business, not mine."

Conreid, as you may remember, was manager of that famous German theater in Irving Place, New York. This was his first venture in opera, which was another reason, perhaps, why I hesitated about singing

SCHUMANN-HEINK IN LIGHT OPERA IN NEW YORK, LOVE'S LOTTERY

under his management. I dreaded the change from Grau, and a new régime.

It was a general break-up, the end of that season, and a sad time it was. Grau left for Europe, and I returned to Germany and the children. Schumann wanted me to stay there—in fact, demanded it; said that he didn't want me to go back now to the United States, since I had given up the Metropolitan. He was very cross.

"Why," I said, "I can't live in Germany now; you shouldn't expect this of me. How could I settle down in one place now, after all my years of opera singing all over the world? I still have a long career before me, and I must always earn money for the children."

Schumann felt so strongly about my returning to America that I didn't tell him then about a new contract I was considering. It was a big jump for me—because it was for light comic opera. "Love's Lottery" was the name of the piece. I knew beforehand that Schumann would be furious. I knew he would storm around about my "descending" to light opera, and, of course, in a way he was right. It is a descent from grand opera to light opera, although there are many beautiful light operas. How I happened to do it, I can not explain at this late day, and it doesn't matter anyway, except that I had stuck to my re-

solve not to go with Conreid, and I was at a loose end for the moment in America, and somehow or other it appealed to me—a new venture—and I always liked that.

At any rate, I kept it a secret until Stange, who wrote the book of "Love's Lottery," came to Germany to see me. Then I had to tell Schumann about the contract. He was furious! He thought goodness knows what—everything! He said:

"You are ruined forever! Going into light opera after all these years! Pretty soon I will hear you are going on the stage in tights and dancing in the ballet!"

"Don't worry," I said. "I'm too fat now for that!"

But he wouldn't listen. He was outraged. He couldn't understand me. "Love's Lottery" after grand opera!

But after a while he had to give in, for my mind was made up. Also, in addition to my salary, I had five percent of the gross receipts, which was certainly an inducement for the venture.

Well, back to the United States I went and began rehearsals for "Love's Lottery." Julian Edwards wrote the music. He was a popular composer. "Love's Lottery" was a very charming opera. I had a great part—I played the rôle of a German washerwoman—which was very effective and dramatic; and the music Ed-

wards wrote for this was classic—which was unusual for a light opera. We had a splendid comedian in it, too—John Slavin, a fine actor—and we had some very funny scenes together. We always made a great hit.

Little did I know, when I left Germany, that I should never see Schumann again. He died in November, and I got the cable at the very beginning of "Love's Lottery." It was a terrible shock, and the beginning of another big change in my life. I was singing in Boston when the news reached me on Sunday, and I wanted to end my engagement then and there and start at once for Germany, but they all came to me—the chorus and the orchestra even—and begged me not to go—to stand by them.

"If you close the show now, you leave us all without an engagement," they said—which was true.

"But I must go," I said. "My children are there without their father."

I wanted to start at once, but they begged me not to leave them all in the lurch, and so it was that I was persuaded and that I stayed on. I sang just the same, but it was an awful time for me. The management closed the theater on Monday night, out of consideration for me, and then Tuesday I sang as usual. The news of my husband's death had been given to the

Associated Press, and the newspapers were full of it. The house was packed. The first row was taken by Harvard students, and that night and every night I had a beautiful bouquet of violets and the loveliest letter from them, to show me their respect and appreciation. I shall never forget the sympathy of those Boston audiences, and particularly those Harvard students, for as long as I sang there, I had my bunch of violets every night.

Of course I shouldn't have been able to go on with "Love's Lottery" had it not been that my mother-in-law was still living with my children in Germany, and caring for them as she had done for some years. Well, I finished the season somehow, and then in April—another blow—my mother-in-law died, too. Dear soul! Another terrible shock. She had been such a friend and help to me all those years. What I should have done without her! Now I was really alone in the world, and my children fatherless.

As I told you, Schumann's death was the beginning of a great change, and here it was. Like many another woman, I simply felt incapable of going on by myself. I didn't feel equal to standing up alone with all those children—eight of them—and then it was I married my secretary, William Rapp. I turned to him for the protection I needed. I simply could not go on

SCHUMANN-HEINK'S CHILDREN

LEFT TO RIGHT: WALTER, HENRY, CHARLOTTE, AUGUST, HANS (SEATED)

with my career, and with all my children, left utterly alone. In spite of all that I had gone through in the early years of poverty and struggle, there had never been a time before when there was not some one at hand to care for them, when my troubles were on me. First, my beloved father and mother; then Schumann and his dear mother. Now they were all gone, and I was absolutely alone. So I married Mr. Rapp in May, right after my mother-in-law's death.

Naturally there was the usual criticism; nevertheless, it was my business, and I thought I was doing the right thing. He was my secretary and had been of great assistance to me on my tour. I felt that I must have his protection, not only for myself, but for the children.

Alas! it was just the contrary I got—for when we arrived in Germany, I found that by my marriage to a foreigner I had given up all rights to my money, children, and property. It was the German law, and by it I lost my rights over the children, and the money which belonged to me and was in the German bank. Everything was in Mr. Schumann's name, and I had no power to touch even a cent. I had to prove that I was the money-earner of the family, and even then I only got a share—about one-third of what there was.

If I had known the law, I should have had it as a

protection. But what woman knows the law? It was a horrible time. I could not get the children. I wanted to take them to the United States, but was told they were German citizens and must stay there—and the boys must serve in the army. Well, when I heard that, I just determined I'd get them any way. Yes, my children belonged to me, and I'd have them—that was settled! There were six boys and two girls. August was over twenty-one, so he didn't count. It was Charlotte, Henry, Hans, Walter, Ferdinand, Marie and George Washington that I had on my hands then. I could not touch anything in the Villa Tini—in fact, I had to buy it back again to get my right to sell it or give it away. Later on, when the War broke out, I gave it to my oldest daughter, Charlotte, and put it in her name.

I was simply desperate when I found all this out. I said to Rapp:

"This is the most miserable thing to happen. I tell you what we must do. We will get furniture movers and pack up everything right away. Furthermore we will send everything straight off to Hamburg and buy our steamer tickets on the first steamer that leaves. It can be done in forty-eight hours"—and it was.

I took everything. I was so furious! We put every-

thing, even the dog house, into the vans, and they were taken to the *Deutschland*, one of the fastest boats at that time, and away we sailed—furniture, belongings, and children.

I knew that the minute the children were in the United States, the American law would protect me. I was an American citizen already by my marriage to Rapp. I took a house in Ludlow, New York, from Mrs. Edwards, whose husband wrote "Love's Lottery," and there we went straight from Europe.

The house was too small for my big family, but we managed somehow, and the next season I bought a place in Singac, New Jersey. The boys were in boarding school, and I had a governess for the other children. I went on with "Love's Lottery" for a time that season, and then I found it was too hard. I could not keep on at that rate; I should have lost my voice. So I gave up $5,000 to get rid of my contract, and determined that I should sing only in concerts for the present. Then I had to go to Europe to be "cleaned up" again, as we say, to be looked upon as a first-class artist after my light opera venture.

So to Europe I went, and was a whole year away. My manager, Mr. Henry Wolfsohn, advised this. I sang in all kinds of concerts and had most wonderful engagements, particularly in Paris and in some

London concerts with Sir Henry Wood. While I was in Paris, dear old Grau came to see me. Well, I was so happy to see him I just took him in my arms and kissed him and hugged him so hard that he said I almost broke his ribs!

"Never mind your old ribs," I said. "My dear Grau, I love you! I love you!"

Then, of course, we sat down and talked over our days together at the Metropolitan, and he said:

"Do you know, Heink-e, what touched me most of all at that time? Your loyalty. For, after all, I hadn't treated you any better than my other artists."

It was then that I told him again how kind and generous he had been to me always, and it made him happy, I could see. Then he asked about "Love's Lottery," and I told him about it and of Mr. Schumann's death and of all my troubles, and he was as sympathetic as ever. He didn't think much of the light opera business, and I told him I had given it up; that I sang now only in concerts and was going to stick to them.

But Grau shook his head and said, "No, you are too dramatic—you will have to sing in opera again. You belong there."

He was staying at Monte Carlo then for his health, and he was to have ten performances at the opera house there and wanted me to sing for him. He

thought it would help me, and said I could get a big price for each performance.

But I said, "No, I will stick to my concerts for the present."

"All right," he answered, "but why don't you stay in Paris? You can make lots of money here."

"No," I said, "I am going to stay in the United States; my home is there now."

I didn't know then that it was the last time I should ever see him. But it was, alas! He died about a year after that. Dear old Grau!

I have a little funny story to tell you about Melba and Paris. Melba was there at this time, and she has already told the story in her Memoirs—probably far better than I shall be able to, because I was the unconscious victim, but, even so, I am going to have a shot at it, too.

I was a great admirer of Melba. To me she had the most wonderful soprano voice, like a bird's. It was different from Nordica's. Nordica's was fuller, but Melba's was perfection as a coloratura singer. It was like a crystal bell, her voice. She respected me and admired my art, that I know, and I certainly admired hers. We sang together in the London days. She was greatly beloved by the English. Now for the story, which she tells in her "Memories and Melodies" and

which was first published in a monthly magazine more than two years ago. The moment it was out, many of my kinds friends squandered at least a nickel to get a copy and sent it to me post haste!

Oh, I remember the occasion she speaks of very well, at a great concert in Paris. It was an afternoon affair, and I very innocently came out in *evening dress,* which, it seemed to me, was the proper thing to do. But perhaps, I have already told you, dress was never my strong point. Neither was my face! All I was thinking about was my great Mozart aria. I didn't give a rap about my clothes. That was stupid, of course, and Melba was one of the very first people to discover it. She says, if I may be allowed to quote her:

"Schumann-Heink had a face which was possibly more interesting for character than remarkable for beauty, and I am afraid that she did not at that time pay very much attention to her dress. . . . and I was interested to know what the French people would think about her. As soon as she came on the stage, my heart sank! I bit my lips with pain at the fear of what the French people would think of her, for it was an *afternoon* concert, and Mme. Schumann-Heink was in *evening* dress and presented an appearance which the Parisians evidently considered very odd!"

So I am afraid I must have been a sight, standing there—for you see how shocked Melba was when she saw me. Oh, yes, she was afraid of what those spoiled darling people of Paris would say, and she actually "trembled" for me; but she didn't tremble long, for she herself says—and I am going to quote her again, because it makes me so happy that my art triumphed not only over the spoiled Parisian audience, but over the great Melba herself, for she continues:

"But then she [that's me] began to sing, and before she had finished her *recitative* in the Mozart aria, the whole house rose to their feet and cheered her! They had forgotten everything but her artistry."

Thank you, Melba! For I may now be permitted to add that you have not exaggerated—it is all quite true. The people simply rose up and went wild, and shouted, and knocked with their canes on the floor, and gave me an ovation that was simply tremendous. I suppose, after that, Melba and all the rest could sit back in their comfortable seats and be happy. I suppose that my evening dress and my homely face were forgotten. Yes, I suppose that my success was even great enough to have enabled me to continue my aria in—overalls! That Mozart aria is one of my favorites. People call it "Old Schumann-Heink's war horse"—and I certainly rode to victory on it that day!

PART IV

IV

Melba—and Nordica—what singers they were! Nordica was an American—her real name was Lillian Norton. She was born in Farmington, Me., in 1859. Her grandfather was a revivalist preacher known as "Camp Meeting John Allen." Her early career was made as a concert singer, and then she went to Italy for her début and sang in opera in many Italian cities with great success. It was under the management of Abbey and Grau that she came to the Metropolitan Opera House in 1889. It was a beautiful voice she had. No one worked harder than Nordica to accomplish what she did. Her ambition was simply boundless. Nordica was one of my best friends as long as she lived. I have told you about her kindness to me in London, and now I will tell you about her art. She was a most wonderful coloratura singer and had a perfectly placed voice. She sang as nobody I ever heard sing—nobody. She could have gone on, I am sure, many years longer than she did, had not her tremendous ambition to sing in German opera overruled her good judgment. With that lovely coloratura voice she tried operas that were too much for her, not realizing how far she should go. I firmly believe that

if, instead of turning to Wagner operas, she had kept on as she was, a lyric artist, she would be singing to this day. She didn't know the German language, and she tackled the most difficult German rôles. She did it wonderfully, but it robbed her of her beautiful voice too soon. It was a pity and so unnecessary. It is a great art to know how far you can go. There is an old saying, "Nobody can jump over his own shadow." That is a fact. Everybody should know his own limitations. Poor Nordica! Ambition was too much for her.

It made a terrible impression on me at the time, for she talked to me about doing the German operas. I think her friends, too, urged her on—the world was then at her feet. She felt there was no limit to what she could accomplish. She had tremendous success everywhere and she was a great social favorite and a very beautiful woman, always in high society. People flattered her right and left—and there you are. Nobody of importance, I am sure, had the courage then to tell her the truth, except me—and I didn't count. I remember when she first spoke to me about it in London. She had just come from Bayreuth where she had sung *Elsa,* in which she was magnificent; but there had been some trouble there—I don't know what

LILLIAN NORDICA

—and she was severely criticized. Then it was she said to me:

"Now, Ernestine, I will tell you what I am going to do. I will sing *Brünnhilde, Isolde,* too, and all the other big Wagner rôles. I swear it!"

I was amazed, for I knew what it meant. I said: "*Ach!* no, you cannot do those parts. They are too heavy for your voice. They are not for you."

But she would not listen. She said: "I *will* do them! In two years I will do them. I will be ready then. You'll see, Ernestine—You'll see!"

I knew then it was useless to argue with her. I couldn't say anything more.

Well, she kept her promise. She did sing *Brünnhilde* two years later in London, and after that she sang it many times in New York. But her voice couldn't stand it. It was like pulling a delicate string on heavy stuff. She sang beautifully, of course, for the time being, and it is a marvel that she lasted as long as she did. There is so much to tell you about her, but I must jump now to the end of it all, which is sad enough, for she died very miserably, poor Nordica.

I remember the time she sang *Isolde* and I *Brangäne* in Chicago. In the first act she was tremendous —such a success! But in the second act she went to

pieces. She gave all she had in that first act and of course the critics roasted her mercilessly—cruelly!

She was then starting on a long tour to Australia. I went to the hotel to say good-bye to her the next day.

"How nice of you to come!" she said.

But I knew from her face that she had seen those notices; that she knew the truth.

"Come back, Lillian," I said. "Never mind the critics. They were as mean as they could be, but never mind them."

And so it was I said good-bye to her. When she kissed me, I had a funny feeling that I should never see her again, but I said, "Forget all this, Lillian. Come back, and you will sing beautifully again, better than ever."

But she answered very quietly, and so sadly: "Oh, no! No, I didn't sing well last night. I know it—but I did the best I could. My great days are over, Ernestine, all over! I am now going down, down, down—and you are going up and up and up."

"Oh," I said, "don't talk nonsense"—but I knew she realized it all at last.

That was the last time I ever saw her. She went to Australia, and it was while coming back from there that she was shipwrecked, and was taken ill with

pneumonia, and died. Oh, it was a tragic end for her, for she died alone in Batavia, Island of Java, on May 10, 1914, with only her faithful accompanist, Romaine Simmons, with her. It is touching to remember that the last thing she asked was to hear music, and a violinist, who was in the company, played for her in the next room. Simmons said that, weak as she was, when she heard the violin, she opened her eyes and whispered:

"Oh! Simmons, what is it? Who's playing?"

"Your violinist," he said.

She closed her eyes for a long time, and then she spoke again, and it is the last thing she ever said.

"Isn't it beautiful?" That was all. The next morning she died.

Poor Nordica, her time had come. And it was perhaps for her the best. She never could have endured the disappointment not to be still the great star.

What great days those were for the Metropolitian! What an array of singers. Europe poured out her best, and at that period America had produced some of her finest voices. First and foremost of the great visiting opera stars was Katharina Klafsky, whom I have already mentioned in connection with the Hamburg theater. Her story is one of the most wonderful and tragic stories you ever heard, and her death made

a terrible impression upon me and on every one who knew her.

Klafsky was born in Hungary in 1855. Her father was the shoemaker of the little village where she was born. They were very poor and after her mother's death she was left penniless. Her first job was as a nurse-maid in Vienna, and it was her employers there who paid for her first singing-lessons. Later on she got into the opera and worked herself up from obscure little parts in the chorus. She also sang in church when she was only eight years old. She was blessed with a marvelous natural talent and a beautiful voice, a mezzo-soprano. The highest notes were not always good perhaps, and she didn't always have them in control because she didn't know how. But when she was in fine voice she would sing a B and B flat easily, but when she was not in voice or tired then of course these notes went back on her, as is always the case.

Klafsky's life was full of tragedies, and she had a tremendous career on and off the stage from the very beginning. She was married three times, and married very young the first time. She had two children by this first husband, but nobody knows what became of them—they disappeared and were never heard of again.

The second time she married a man by the name

of Greve, a banker. But, alas! he wanted to become a great singer as he had a tremendous voice, but that he did not succeed in doing. They were most happily married, and by Greve she had a little daughter, who afterwards became a nun, so the story goes. After the death of Greve she married for the third time Otto Lohse, who was one of the conductors at Hamburg. Klafsky sang in Hamburg under the great Hans von Bülow. Matilda Brandt was there at the time. Now, von Bülow didn't like Klafsky at all, but he loved Matilda Brandt because she was a great musician and Klafsky sang her own way, and that von Bülow couldn't stand. And what he would say to her, well, it wasn't very pleasant sometimes! He was czar there, you know. If you knew your part and sang *musically* he was your greatest friend; but if you didn't, well—!

Von Bülow was a guest conductor at Hamburg at that time. Klafsky also traveled with Angelo Neumann, one of the first conductors who had the courage to bring out the Wagner operas in Germany, especially the Ring. He was then the manager of the Leipsig Stock theater and at that time he took a traveling Wagner company all over Europe—and Klafsky had replaced Hedwig Reicher Kindermann who was a very great artist and the leading singer at that time.

This is interesting to Americans because she was the mother of Frank Reicher, a well known actor, who has lived many years in America. Reicher Kindermann also sang in the original performances at Bayreuth.

Klafsky was the most wonderful *Isolde* you can imagine. She broke all traditions. She was in constant fights with Mahler, too, but she didn't care. They didn't dare do anything about it or interfere with her. She had her own way always. You can talk about all the *Isoldes* of the world—but I tell you she was the best of the lot. She was absolutely *realistic*—no pose, no effort, she just *was Isolde*. It was elemental—tremendous—the real thing. Her whole heart was in it. Every gesture was beautiful, and those deep, deep gray eyes of hers—how they could look through you! They were the last things I saw of Klafsky. Even after she was laid in her coffin I saw her great gray eyes still looking at me. You can imagine how she affected every one. To this day I can still see and hear and feel her. Heavens! how she sang *Brünnhilde* in the "*Götterdammerung*." She was not tall. She was hardly so tall as I am, but when she came out in that great costume as *Brünnhilde* before she jumps into the fire with her horse, oh, how tall she looked! And when she sang that last thing—*Gott,* how she sang! It was simply unbelievable. I tell you, your hair would stand up

when this woman came in and you heard her sing like that.

If you could go over her whole life, it was not everything that was beautiful, we must admit. She was not refined, in a sense. She was what she was. Of course she could damn and swear like a trooper when necessary; but, what an artist! Everything she did was the same. She was elemental, tremendous in everything, but, still, what art!

And in *Ortrud*—I learned a lot from her in *Ortrud*. She sang *Elsa,* too, in the same opera—think of it! She sang *Brünnhilde,* and at one time she even sang *Valentino.* But she never sang *Fides* in "*Le Prophète.*" Yes she was the most wonderful singer, say what you like, in the whole world. There was no one to compare with her in the Wagner parts.

Well, to go on with her story. She finally broke her contract in Hamburg and went to America. She broke her contract with Pollini and owed him a large sum of money. Lohse her husband came with her. Yes, she really ran away and Pollini could have put her in jail when she came back (for her debts) but of course he didn't. She was engaged by Walter Damrosch who had organized a short opera season of German opera the year before (1895) and brought her, Ternina, Rosa Sucher and Lilli Lehmann and many other well-

known German opera singers over for his special company. They had a short season at the Metropolitan and then went on tour through the West. Walter Damrosch of course was the conductor, and Klafsky was one of his most tremendous drawing cards. She was crazy about America and had enormous success here as *Brünnhilde, Isolde* and especially in *Fidelio* which was one of her greatest parts.

Yes, she was crazy about America from the start. Well, she returned to Hamburg the next season and she went straight to the office of the manager. Of course there was much talk and a great to do—some friendly, some malicious, but things were finally fixed up again. There was to be a new repertoire and Klafsky was to reappear in the Hamburg Opera. Her opening night she was to sing *Elizabeth* in "Tannhäuser." That was a night never to forget in your whole life. Mahler conducted. The second act starts with *Elizabeth,* you know, coming out and greeting the Hall, with her arms outstretched—a beautiful picture. When she came out, at the very sight of her the house simply broke loose—it was impossible for her to sing, impossible to go on, the applause was so great. This reappearance at Hamburg her opening night was a tremendous affair. The house packed solid —the people almost hung on the chandeliers to hear

her, and see what would happen. Well, the curtain went up on the second act and Klafsky came out. I will never forget it. I stood in the wings. As she came forward, arms outstretched to begin the great aria—"*Dich teure Halle!*"—you could actually see her knees shake—her whole body so trembled and shook with emotion, and then as I told you, that whole packed house broke loose with applause—and went mad!

The people were weeping, shouting her name, and some actually screaming! I'll never, never forget it. I myself was singing the "Shepherd Boy" that night. I hardly know how I did it. I can still see to this day the scene when Klafsky came out, tried to sing the great opening lines and then fell on her knees in the middle of the stage and began to cry! She was simply broken in two, with the sight of that house and their applause.

Well, Mahler, of course had to stop conducting. He could do nothing! He just stood there, with his baton in the air—waiting! Then he turned round, folded his arms and glared at the audience. Still it had no effect, they kept calling and calling and calling. Then Klafsky stood up. She pulled herself together and tried again. But once more she broke down completely. She could not go on,—the people still shouting. So she

ran from the stage and back to her dressing room to recover herself. I couldn't see then—my eyes were so full of tears. I was as excited as the rest. In a few minutes she returned. She had recovered herself then a little and started once more the great aria. The second time the people were quiet. Her first notes of course were trembly, but then her voice came out full and strong and she sang it as she never sang it before. *Ach, Gott!* what an ovation when she finished. All my life the sound of her voice will stay in my ears. She sang even better than before she went to America. She sang *Elizabeth* that night. Then afterward the *Countess* in the "Marriage of Figaro," and I don't know what else. She sang for two weeks, and then on Saturday night she sang "Fidelio" by Beethoven. That was the last time—her last appearance. But we didn't know it then. Yes, *Leonore* in "Fidelio" was one of her best parts. It was an overwhelming performance. Such tenderness as she gave in that last scene, the great love duet at freeing her husband from prison. She simply poured out her glorious voice. It will vibrate and sing always in the memory.

During the opera that last night, there was something in her voice that was different. It was as if it came from far, far away. We all noticed it. One of my colleagues said that her voice was not from this

earth, it was as from another world. And he said as we sat there, "She is still in America—she is not here." You know, every one felt it. Even the audience. And that night when she sang the people hardly even dared applaud. Everybody felt something different, something not of this world. She sang it so perfectly—everything was so beautiful—her acting, her gesture, her expression—everything. It was not she. It was like another creature—like a spirit.

It was on that Saturday night after "Fidelio" that she said good-bye. After the performance, while she was undressing, the wardrobe woman came in, and Klafsky, strangely enough, kissed her, and said, "Good-bye, my friend, I shan't come back again."

The wardrobe woman was amazed, and said, "Why, Frau Klafsky, what do you mean? You are well now again, why do you say you won't come back to us?"

But Klafsky was very quiet. She only said, "No, I shall not come back. I know that. I shall never come back again—never—"

Then the wardrobe woman said, "But do you return to America, perhaps?"

"No," she said. "No, I am not going back to America—but I don't know—it seems to me I shall never come back again."

Then the wardrobe woman laughed and said, "*Gott in Himmel,* Frau Klafsky, of that we are not afraid —you will come back, I am sure."

This was on Saturday. On Sunday, she made her last will and arranged everything for her death. She sent for her lawyer and said, "I don't know, but I feel I should be taking care of my house and should now be prepared for anything."

On Monday she was to sing *Ortrud*—but she never sang it. I sang it for her. She woke up Monday morning and said to her husband. "Open the shutters." She lived in a house where there was a wonderful garden at the back and she wanted to look out on the garden always the first thing. Then she asked him to bring her a glass of water and a toothbrush. She said she had such a funny feeling in her mouth. Lohse opened the window and went to get the water. But when he came back, she'd fallen unconscious on her pillow.

She lay there and nothing could rouse her. She didn't wake up again until Thursday morning. They sent for the doctors, of course, and they examined her but didn't know what it was. They couldn't find anything. Finally they sent for Dr. Schele, one of the great surgeons in Germany at the time. He came and on Thursday morning suddenly she woke up. She said to her husband, "I slept long, didn't I."

She looked then like a dead person, Lohse said. Then the same thing happened as before. She asked for a glass of water and again fell back unconscious.

Then it was that they called in another famous doctor. Well, they examined her eyes, and decided there was a tumor on the brain, that perhaps they could save her if it was operated on at once, that nothing else would do.

So they prepared everything for the operation. The great dining room table on which she had had her wedding feast—poor Klafsky—was prepared, and she was put on it Saturday afternoon for the operation. The doctors said there must be trepanization, and they made seven incisions in her head. But, alas! they found nothing could be done. She was in such agony and she screamed so loud even with the anaesthetic that the neighbors ran out of their houses. Oh, it was terrible! It lasted for hours. And when it was all over they bandaged her up and she still lay unconscious.

At the end of two days the doctors said, "We must try to lift the bandage a little and see how it looks." *Ach, Gott!* they must have done it too soon, or something—I don't know what—for when they took off the bandage—poor Katy!—it was the end. A terrible ending!

At four o'clock she was dead.

She had the most queenly funeral you can imagine. The whole city of Hamburg was there, the whole city was in mourning. I don't think if the Mayor himself had died there could have been such a funeral. They had even the street lamps all hung with black streamers, and there were six great horses drawing the hearse.

She had made her will on Sunday and had begged to be dressed in her costume as *Elizabeth* in "Tannhäuser"—she wanted to be buried as *Elizabeth.* And so she was. She looked wonderful, with that white thing around her head like a nun. Her colleagues sang beautifully during the services—all except me, I didn't sing—I couldn't. The funeral was held from her house, and when I saw her the last time it was in her coffin as *Elizabeth.*

I stood there with my Schumann and looked and looked at her. After the coffin was closed, I could still see her deep great eyes looking at me. Yes, I saw those eyes looking at me as I stood there, and I whispered to Schumann, "Paul, Paul, do you see her eyes?"

And he said, "Keep quiet, Tini, you are crazy!"

"No," I said, "No, no, I see her eyes! I see her eyes still looking at me." And so I did, I can always see her eyes when I think of her even now, still looking at me and through me.

Poor Klafsky! She was terribly in debt when she died. Everything gone. There was really nothing left but her costumes. Her husband, too, had lost his position in Hamburg. The house belonged to her daughter, so there was really nothing left but her wardrobe and her debts. So the whole thing was put up at auction. That was the end.

And now comes a strange thing. I am very superstitious, I admit. It is against my religion and my reason, but still I cannot help it. When Nordica heard that Klafsky's costumes were to be auctioned,—she was crazy about her *Isolde* clothes—she bought them. When I heard about this I had a terrible shock because Klafsky was always jealous in the old days, and I said to myself, "*Ach,* Nordica will never wear these things with blessings, never." And I said to Schumann, "You know, Paul, there is no luck coming when one is dead, and Klafsky is now dead and no one should use her costumes—she would not like it, I know it. I am afraid Nordica will have bad luck if she wears Klafsky's *Isolde* costume. Now—"

"Well," he said, "if you feel that way about it, why don't you write to Nordica and tell her this?"

But I said, "Oh, no, she might misunderstand—it's not my business. I can't say anything."

Well, Nordica bought the costume anyway, and

AMELIA MATERNA

she wore it once or twice. It always made me feel so badly when I sang with her and saw her in that *Isolde* costume. Yes, it really hurt me. But that was my superstition. I myself could never have done it.

What interpreters Wagner had. Go over the list and wonder if another generation can produce such names: Klafsky, Lehmann, Materna, Ternina, Rosa Sucher, who was a great *Isolde,* too, and many others.

Yes, Sucher was a famous *Isolde*—and looked very beautiful. Her husband was the first conductor at the Hamburg Stadt Theater. She didn't sing Italian opera —only the German. She was also a great favorite in Berlin.

And Malten too in Dresden—she was a great person in her time, and beautiful also. She sang all these great rôles. She created the *Queen of Sheba.* Now, Rosa Sucher was beautiful only on the stage, but Malten in life was very beautiful, and a fine artist. She was an aristocrat among the artists. And she was a great favorite, too, of Wagner's.

Materna, one of the finest of them all, was a light opera singer in the beginning, and afterward became a great figure with Richard Wagner. And in Bayreuth also, and in New York. It was Materna you know who first heard me sing as a child—and pronounced my doom!

MARIE WILT

But none was a greater singer than Marie Wilt. Wilt, who, you will remember, I had my very first singing with as a little girl in the Beethoven Ninth symphony. She was the one who learned to sing from the echo in the mountains, so the story goes. She was born in Vienna in 1833, and it was the echo that was her first teacher. She sang and would listen to the echo, how it sounded and that, they say, is how she first listened to herself and learned to sing right. She had it all from Nature, and was blessed with a glorious voice. Marie Wilt, though, could not act at all. She was colossal. She weighed three hundred pounds! She was rather horrid, too—a tremendous woman.

Once she came to Vienna as a guest, and was to sing *Valentino* in "The Huguenots." Well, she comes on the stage, and the page announces "Here comes the most beautiful lady of the Court!" or something like that. When the audience saw Wilt, they began to giggle at once, for out she came, perfectly enormous! But when she began to sing, they stopped their laughing, and by the time she came to the grand finale, the high C, the people who first laughed sat there with their mouths open! After that the applause was so great that the whole opera house shook. Marie Wilt was a perfect singer, and she was very musical. She sang the lyric soprano rôle *Pamina* in the "Magic

Flute." One night she would sing that and the next night the "Queen of the Night." And she sang it in the *original* key, too, taking the high F. Now there was no one except Mozart's sister-in-law who could sing it in the original key. They always had to sing it a note or two lower and sang the E flat instead of the high F. But Wilt was never afraid. High F was nothing to her.

Klafsky of course conquered through her emotion. Wilt through her pure voice. She too is dead now, like so many others. And they all died poor, you know, which is a sad thing.

Ternina, whom everybody in America remembers, was another one of the great ones—perfect in music, perfect in giving the right artistic touch to everything, with a very beautiful voice. There is no end to the list of those renowned singers of the great days of tradition, now so rapidly passing. One of the big men singers who was in Dresden when I began was Emil Fischer. He was a tremendous favorite, too, in America for many years. He had a splendid bass voice. He, too, broke his contract in Dresden so that he could never go back again, and he stayed on in America. He came to the Metropolitan in the early days, under Stanton, and was the very first *Hans Sachs* in the "Meistersingers" in New York. It is interesting to

know that he was the original *Hans Sachs* in the first performance of the opera in Munich.

Albert Niemann was another big artist, a tenor. He also sang at the Metropolitan. He sang with Lehmann, and was the first singer to create the rôle of *Tristan* in New York. And Gudehus—still another fine tenor of the Dresden days, had the distinction of being one of the first three singers who created the rôle of *Parsifal*. And there was Van Dyck and Van Rooy—who were both big artists. Van Rooy was a special favorite at Bayreuth in his time.

Many of those great singers were in New York, and among the women Pauline Lucca was one to be remembered. She sang here for two years. She was one of the spoiled darlings of the Vienna Royal Opera, and was said to have been a good friend and protégée of the old Kaiser. She was the one who went in 1870 or 71 on the Front in France (during the war) and walked with Bismarck in the trenches. Their picture together was taken and Bismarck for the first time in his life was gossiped about! Poor Bismarck, of course, was perfectly innocent, but it's a good story.

Lucca came as guest to Hamburg, and I sang with her there. I remember one place in the opera she whispered to me, "Goodness, Heink-e, I don't know a word of this! You will have to sing it *all!*" So I sang both

parts (in the *en semble*), I asked the questions and answered them myself! When the solo part came then she sang herself, for of course the solos at least she knew.

People are always asking me, as they ask all singers, especially older singers, if I think the voices of those days were greater than the voices of today; and I always make the same answer. Perhaps some of the voices were greater, though there will always be great and beautiful voices in the world; but there is one great difference, I must say, between that time and this. And that difference is that *then* they had to *know* something—everything, I might say, about singing, acting, style, tradition, etc. They simply couldn't go on and sing a big rôle with just a beautiful voice—they had to know what they were about. The standard was much higher. Those great conductors and the musicians of those early days demanded that things should be done in a certain way, and they were the absolute autocrats—masters. I can not say this too often. And the importance of it—well, I don't think we need to go into that. Anyone who thinks or hears can realize for themselves the difference between the great singers of the old school and the singers who trust only to a beautiful voice for success.

Perhaps one of the greatest names to illustrate the

very thing we are talking about is that magic, never-to-be-forgotten name, Jean de Reszke. He was another great friend among my colleagues in the early days who deserves all the tribute I can pay his memory, for, alas! he, too, is dead—Jean de Reszke—world-famed artist, gentleman, and friend.

Jean was born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1850. He came of a most distinguished family, and it was from his mother—a very accomplished woman—that he had his first singing lessons. The story of how he changed his voice from a high baritone to the tenor that we all knew in his great days is too well known for me to tell again. He studied with Sbriglia—in Paris—then came out a tenor! It was a wonderful thing to do, and all those who heard him sing know the wonder of his art, and how he used his marvelous voice which was, comparatively speaking, a small one. Now, if one has a tremendous voice, it is easy, but to have less material and do what he did—reach the highest point a singer can—is, in my opinion, and in that of those who realize what it means—a marvelous thing. And that Jean de Reszke did.

His diction was perfect, his acting so eloquent and moving. There was no one to compare with him. No one—which is still true today. Every detail of his performance was simply perfection. He was the most

EDOUARD DE RESZKE AS MEPHISTOPHELES IN FAUST

romantic figure on the stage—a big, tall, handsome man he was—like a god. Nobody ever sang the great aria from "Faust," *Salut de meure* as Jean de Reszke. He was the best *Tristan,* too, and the best *Siegfried* of his time. There are plenty of best *Lohengrins* and best other parts, but to sing *Tristan* and *Siegfried* as Jean sang them is something to remember all one's days. Ternina and Jean together in "Tristan" were truly wonderful. Jean always appreciated the art of others, and to do even a small part and do it beautifully was a thing that he of all my fellow colleagues understood best and appreciated most.

He was full of generosity, too. I remember at the Metropolitan one season there was a big deficit, and the company was near bankruptcy. Jean de Reszke right away loaned Grau a large sum of money to help him through, and he gave this money principally so that the chorus could be paid and sent back to Italy or wherever they came from. He always did everything on a grand scale. The next season, I must tell you, Grau paid him back every penny. Grau simply adored Jean—he was one of his greatest admirers.

This makes me think now of a funny story that Jean used to tell about him. Grau was the most generous friend and the best impresario you could imagine, and held the very highest principles at the

JEAN DE RESZKE AS TRISTAN IN TRISTAN AND ISOLDE

Metropolitan. He was a generous man, too, but he had his little peculiarities, like the rest of us. He was very particular about the cost of small things. *Ach!* he would raise a terrible rumpus over a nickel carfare, but would never kick about a hundred-dollar hotel bill! Such was his way. I sang in many concerts for him throughout the country, for which he always paid me extra, of course. He never minded how much I spent for the hotel, as I told you, but he would refuse to pay fifty cents extra for my cab! Jean de Reszke realized this, and we used to laugh about it. He once said a very funny thing about Grau. He put it all in a nutshell. I can hear him now in his very bad English. He spoke very slowly and precisely always:

"Oh, yes, yes," he said, "Mr. Grau is very generous, very kind, but, while he gives you a cigar that costs him two dollars, at the same time, he refuses you the match to light it!"

My relations with these three great men—Jean and Edouard de Reszke and Pol Plançon, were the happiest of my career. Speaking of Plançon, who was a Frenchman through and through—it's a funny thing, but he was the best *Landgraf* in "Tannhäuser" and had the best German diction of any of the singers. Think of it—better German diction than any German singer, and he a Frenchman! He had a noble bass voice

and a splendid stage presence, too. He was a fine actor. It was really a much finer voice than Edouard de Reszke's. Edouard was a more realistic singer, a more rugged type than Plançon. Edouard de Reszke had an enormous success wherever he went. He sang always with his brother Jean, and they were absolutely devoted to each other. Edouard was certainly a fine actor too. He was a huge man (very handsome on the stage). He had a heart like a child and always was so good natured. He used to tell wonderfully funny stories, and was a good mimic, too. He loved to mimic people. His most famous rôle was *Mephisto* in "Faust." You could never forget it—that wonderful scarlet figure! In my opinion, though, Plançon was a greater *Mephistopheles*—it was different of course, but greater art. Plançon was a man who could sing every part—like Scotti. Edouard was more limited in his rôles.

Jean de Reszke's great success in the Wagnerian rôles made Cosima Wagner and all Bayreuth eager to get him to sing there in the Cycle. He wanted to do it, too, but Cosima would not allow that the four days of the Cycle be disturbed by giving a rest in between, and Jean said, if she would not allow that, he couldn't sing at Bayreuth. He had agreed meantime to study the parts without the cuts. In America cuts are al-

ways made and many times much of the sense of the opera is destroyed for that reason. Jean de Reszke said that he would study the parts without cuts, according to Bayreuth tradition, but he must have a day between to rest. Now, "Siegfried," without the cuts is simply tremendous. They are obliged to have three-quarters of an hour intermission between the big acts, but even that is not enough rest; the singers are exhausted. Of course, these big intermissions are a mistake artistically, because they take the audience out of it. It was Cosima's desire that "Siegfried" really should be sung without interruption—a wonderful idea, but impossible for the singers.

It was a great pity that Jean could not have gone there. He would have made a great hit in Bayreuth, for he was the ideal *Siegfried*—so elegant—an aristocrat among singers. It is hard for me to realize they are all gone—Jean and Edouard de Reszke and Plançon.

Plançon died in 1914—right after war was declared. Edouard starved to death during the War on his estate in Poland—a terrible death. He was alone at the time and away from his beloved Jean. Jean, after he retired from the opera, gave singing lessons in Paris, where people came from all over the world to study with him. It was only three years ago at Nice

in 1925 that he, the greatest of that trio, died. We say there is always some one to fill every place, but there are people who can never be replaced; their loss is always fresh in the memory of those who knew them—and so it was with Jean de Reszke.

And now back to old Heink-e, as Grau used to say, It's my turn, and I want to tell you about my call on the German Empress and what really was a funny little episode.

I'd sung in a benefit for the Messina victims after that terrible earthquake, and the Empress heard me. She had also heard me sing in opera in Berlin and wanted to meet me. I knew her first lady-in-waiting, Baroness von Gerstorf, and she invited me to come to see her. Of course, I sang, and then she said:

"Would you not like to sing for the Empress? She wants, I know, to meet you. You have made a deep impression on her."

Of course, I said my usual "tickled to death"—and I was, too. So the Baroness sent a message to the Kaiserin that I was there and should I come to her? The Kaiserin sent back a gracious message to come at once. And I went.

There she was—in a very plain skirt and a white shirt waist, which was the fashion then. Her ornaments were only her wonderful rings and a great rope

of pearls around her neck—big as your thumb! Her hair was plainly done, just like mine. You know, I look a little like the Kaiserin—that is, on the stage. If you look closely, of course, there is not a resemblance. She was a blonde, with blue eyes, and a very different (nice!) nose. But even so, the general impression is that of the Kaiserin. She carried her head very well and had great dignity and sweetness.

Well, I sang several songs for her, and then she invited me to sit on the sofa beside her, and I began, of course, to talk about my children. Baroness von Gerstorf had already told her that I'd taken my boys to the United States after my husband's death. As you know, it was to save them from military duty. The Baroness realized the seriousness of this, so she told the Kaiserin at once that I was an *Austrian!* There could be no questions then from the Kaiser—

"What have you done with your boys? Why aren't they in Germany?"

The Kaiserin was lovely to me, and I told her many things about America, and how I felt at being separated from my youngsters, and all the things she was interested in as a mother. I talked about half an hour, and when I finished, she gave me her hand and said:

"You poor, dear mother! What you have to miss for your profession!"

Of course, that was too much for me, and down came the tears!

Then it was she said, "Now, now, I want to make you happy, and I know that nothing could please and honor you more than to have the great privilege of meeting my husband, the Kaiser!"

Now, as I never liked him, I didn't really care to meet him, but of course I bowed my head, and said, "Yes, it is a great honor," and so forth and so on. I was invited to come the following week.

"King Edward of England and Queen Alexandra will be here," the Kaiserin said. "And we take tea at five o'clock."

I bowed and said, "I shall be here, your Majesty."

It was a great occasion for me, naturally. Queen Alexandra was there, whom I'd seen years before in London as the Princess of Wales, when I sang at Windsor Castle. She was made up so magnificently then, she looked to me about six feet tall, but when I saw her at this tea, I found to my amazement that she was really a little woman. She was very deaf. You had to use an instrument to speak to her.

King Edward was sick that day and could not come, I'm sorry to say. Queen Alexandra apologized

for him and said she was so sorry he could not meet me again. Then—the great moment arrived, and in came the Kaiser!

He was an imposing figure, although he is not a tall man. He has piercing, gray-blue eyes, and he looks at you as if he was going to read right through to the back of your head. He has a shriveled hand and a short arm, as you know. His hand is small, like a child's, but he carries it so well that you don't notice it much. I was presented, and he looked me straight in the eye and said at once,

"How do you like America?"

I don't think I've told you that while I was singing in the Royal Opera in Berlin, I had had to buy myself off from my contract in order to stay in the United States. It was my second year in America that I did this. I paid in good cash 37,000 marks. Of course the Kaiser knew this—as he knew everything —so I felt guilty when he asked me right away how I liked America.

"Do you still want to stay there?" he continued.

And I said, "Yes, I do. And," I added, "I wish your Majesties could see the United States, too."

He replied, nodding his head, "Probably some day I will come."

Then I sang.

He was very enthusiastic—in his own way—and said, "Are you going to sing here at the Opera?"

I replied: "I don't know yet. I may sing as a guest artist."

He was most agreeable and said many nice things. He didn't even mention my boys and military duty or anything, but he did ask lots of questions about America—everything you could think of. He told me he was greatly interested in the United States. And I said again:

"How I wish your Majesty would come to America and see the real people—the great West. See, too, your German farmers. Loads of your people are over there now, and they still have the pictures of your Majesties, of Bismarck and Von Moltke, in their houses."

He said, "That is interesting—very interesting."

Well, it was all very pleasant and nice. After he had finished talking with me, I went to Queen Alexandra.

She smiled and said at once, "It seems to me I know you."

I said, "Yes, I used to sing in Covent Garden, and I had the great honor" (of course, I was shouting my head off to make her hear me!) "to be presented to you at Windsor Castle, when I sang for Queen Victoria."

"Of course!" she cried. "*You* were the singer who made those beautiful low bows! We were all so enthusiastic about your singing and appreciated it very much."

Then I said very proudly, "I can now *speak* English, too, as well as sing it," so I began, very slowly and carefully, to say something in English.

But she interrupted me at once and said, "I know where you learned your English."

I just looked at her, of course, because no questions are allowed to royalty, you know; and she went on:

"You learned it in America, because everything you say is *slang!*"

Then the Kaiser, who was looking me through and through, said in his hard, rasping voice:

"Serves you right. Why don't you speak your *own* language—the *real* language? Why do you want to play off being an American?"

Then I saved my face (and my English, too!) by saying to Queen Alexandra very slowly and carefully, "at least I am able to say correctly that I am proud and happy, your Majesty, that I can once more kiss your hand and sing for you."

Of course, we all laughed as if it was the greatest joke in the world. Then I said good-bye to the Kaiser and Kaiserin and made my low bows. I kissed the hand

of the Kaiserin, and she gave me a real grip in exchange and pressed my hand to her heart. She then presented me with a wonderful brooch, set with diamonds and her initials—the same kind of brooch I got years before from old Queen Victoria. I gave the German brooch to my daughter Lotta; the English one I kept. You don't know how it helps me, when I go to Canada and England! I always put this brooch on, and the officers and customs, they see it, and—well, it helps a lot, I tell you! You know the English loved their old queen—"Old Vic" as she was called and if she had been alive, she would never have allowed the War, in my humble opinion.

Yes, I always got on very well with royalty. Those low bows of mine did the trick, and also the fact that I understood etiquette and never presumed upon their friendliness. I always kept the proper distance. And that is absolutely necessary—with royalty. I can tell you a story to prove this.

The Kaiser, as we all know, was a great autocrat. He would allow himself every fun and joke in the world with an artist, be it man or woman; but the minute any one answered in the same way, they were thrown out! There was once a great singer that he was very fond of. She was a colleague of mine in Hamburg. The Kaiser demanded that she be engaged

at the Berlin Royal Theater. She was asked to sing at a court concert. There is always a reception afterward, when the Kaiser goes from one person to another and speaks to them. As he approached the person next to this singer, she began at once to smile and nod at him. Now, that is where she made a big mistake! She had overstepped the bounds, for he simply drew himself up and just looked at her and passed her by *without recognition!* A week after that she received her discharge from the Royal Theater.

And that is true of most rulers. Old Emperor Frederick, the Kaiser's father, would always have his jokes, but God help the officer who answered in the same tone!

I almost forgot myself once when King Edward (then Prince of Wales) said to me at Windsor Castle, "Tell me, how can you possibly have time to have so many children and still have time left to sing?"

Well, that was the moment I almost forgot myself! It made me so mad! Still, I was in the seventh heaven that day on account of the old Queen, and minded my manners. Yes, that's the secret of my success with all royalty. They could say anything they wanted to me, be as familiar as they liked, but I always kept the proper distance that etiquette demands—a certain space you must always stand, at attention.

When I was in Bayreuth, the royalty were always after me, and one of them, the Grand Duke of Hesse, ran up three flights of stairs once to see me! I was living in two little rooms at this time and Schumann was ill in the back room. I was darning stockings when the Grand Duke entered. When he saw me, he said:

"Heavens! Is this a work for the great *Erda?*"

"Yes," I answered, "because I have to *wear* them!"

"What!" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to tell me you wear *darned* stockings for *Erda?*"

"Of course, yes," I answered. "And these are my first real silk stockings, too. They cost a lot. I bought them in America."

Then the Grand Duke laughed and demanded who was in the next room. "I bet you there is a man in there!"

"Um," I said,—"may be—but it is only my husband, Schumann."

So the Grand Duke laughed again and asked if he could see him, and Schumann came out in a few minutes, and they talked together. He certainly was the most charming and democratic of men, the Grand Duke of Hesse. I still have his picture that he gave me. He wrote on it: "To the faithfulest mother and the greatest *Erda.* Ludwig Ernst, Grand Duke of Hesse."

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS ERDA IN SIEGFRIED

I think I was in Europe for that whole season. I still had about forty engagements in Paris musicales. I made a great hit when I sang there before. But I was homesick for America and my children, so I just up and broke the whole Paris engagement, and took the next boat back to the United States. When I saw the Statue of Liberty again, I just said: "Well! Me for America! and everybody else—Kaiser, Kaiserin, King, and Queen, let them all go to *Dunder!*—I will stay in the United States."

So back I came, and the first thing was to sing in the "*Sängerfest*" at the old Madison Square Garden, to more than 20,000 people. Thank God, I was again my old self, in great voice, and had an immense success! I made $28,000 for my pocket in one month. It was my biggest season. I didn't sing in the opera again; it was just concerts then.

Nothing happened much that was important, as I remember, for several years, except my divorce from Rapp. And there is nothing to say about that now except that, after a few years, we were divorced. I separated from him before that, and in 1914 got my divorce.

PART V

V

1914! *Ach!* What that year meant to the whole world! But before I speak of the war, I must tell you that I was still returning to Europe for the summers and continued to sing in Bayreuth. Before the war broke out, Cosima Wagner had retired, and Bayreuth had lost again half its prestige, for it was she who really kept it up. She never recovered from the death of Wagner and now spends all her days in the Villa Wahnfried, which King Ludwig of Bavaria gave Wagner. Ludwig went insane and killed himself, and now the government of Bavaria is questioning whether he had the right to give away this villa or not—which is a funny thing when you come to think of it! Wagner's family is still living there, and his son Siegfried is in charge at Bayreuth. In Wagner's room nothing is changed—it is all as he left it, and nobody ever goes into it, they say, except Cosima.

Wagner's grave is at the back of the villa. It is like a shrine. It is a beautiful spot, and there is a little spring from the mountains near it. The grave is covered with thick ivy. For years Cosima went every morning to his grave, and in those first months after his death would throw herself (it is said) upon it so

that often the ivy would be all pressed down where she had lain. Her devotion to Wagner was absolute. When he died, she cut off her wonderful braids of hair —she had the most beautiful hair; it reached to the ground—and laid them in his coffin—her last tribute. It is an old Norse legend that the wife should do this, and it is what would have appealed to Cosima, anyway.

She is now very feeble, and everything is kept from her. She lives entirely apart from the world—is allowed to see no one. She had a breakdown, and after that never went again to the Festival House, not even to a performance—rehearsals sometimes, yes, but everything is kept from her. This was three or four years before the War. We singers never saw her except when she was driving in her carriage with her nurse. We were not even allowed to speak to her when we saw her pass. That was terrible for those of us who had worked with her. And I must tell you a story about it, and of how I "put my foot in it," as you say!

One day, quite unexpectedly, I saw her on the street when she was driving. To me she was like a saint, and the sight of her—well, I simply lost all control of myself! I just stopped the carriage and screamed, "*Frau Meisterin! Frau Meisterin!*"

COSIMA WAGNER

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She recognized me at once and called out, "*Meine liebe Erda! Meine liebe Erda!*"

I just threw myself into the carriage with her, and cried out again, "*Frau Meisterin!*" I was so happy to see her once more, and held her hand to my heart—and cried my eyes out.

But the next day I got my punishment—a good scolding—because her daughter said to me:

"Why did you call out to my mother? Why did you do it, Heink? She is so excited now that she talks all the time about you and wants to see you again. We can not keep her quiet. The doctor told us that she must see no one, and now she wants again to go to the opera! Oh, why did you do it?"

But in spite of that scolding, I am glad to this day that I could speak with her once more—for the last time, I know. Oh, if she would only come back—Bayreuth would be what it was in her day. But that can not be, for she is ninety years old—think of it! We in Bayreuth are very loyal, and Cosima is still the magic name to us. I never knew Wagner, but I have been many times to his shrine. The last time, I took away a piece of ivy from his grave and planted it at my villa in Dresden. It was only a tiny bit, but it grew fast and is very beautiful.

And now the war! I was in Bayreuth as usual when

war broke out, never dreaming that such a thing could happen. I never read the newspapers, was never interested in politics. I never knew a prima donna who was, did you? I simply trudged my way and minded my singing.

Ellen Gilbronsen was singing in Bayreuth at this time. She was a famous Swedish prima donna. She started there the same year that I did, 1896—she was *Brünnhilde,* I remember. A week before war was declared, Gilbronsen came to me in great excitement and said, "Pack up, quick, Ernestine, and get away from here. Return to America at once!"

She was in a terrible state and kept saying, "You must pack up at once and go as quick as you can, back to America."

Well, I simply stared at her in amazement.

"What are you talking about?" I said. "Why, we give the Ring again next week, and I am to sing!"

"Oh, you fool!" she said. "You are a fool, Ernestine. There'll be war. There'll be no Ring next week —only war. I know positively that war is to be declared. Go quickly back to America."

But I didn't believe it, so I said, "All right, say so if you like, but until Siegfried Wagner himself tells me to go, I shall stay here."

I didn't hear any more about war—nobody else

said anything, so of course I didn't believe a word Gilbronsen said. But a few days after this we sang "Parsifal," and when we came out after the first act —*Gott in Himmel!* war had been declared!

Even to this day I have no words to tell you what we felt at that moment. We were struck dumb! Stunned! And then began the terrible excitement—the musicians rushed away. Most of them threw down their instruments and ran, without a word. The command had reached them to report immediately to their regiments. They were almost all soldiers, and many of them officers in the Austrian and German armies, and one and all had to go immediately to their posts. War had been declared between Austria and Russia. And God knows what was going to happen. But, in spite of many rumors to the contrary, I want to say now that we did manage somehow to *finish* "Parsifal" that day. The few musicians that were left carried on somehow, and the performance was finished. Muck conducted.

I was as desperate as the rest, for I had not only myself, but a big family on my hands. I had with me that season Mrs. Hoffman, my accompanist, her son, my boy George Washington, a schoolmate of his, Marie, and my Jap cook. To make things worse, my accompanist, Mrs. Hoffman, and her son had no pass-

ports (Americans did not need passports before the war and rarely carried them) and they were traveling on my account. I had passports of course, but I knew something must be done at once to get back to America. First of all, my Japanese cook was arrested and put in jail. Such confusion and excitement! Nobody knew what to do first. The one thought of Americans was to get home as quickly as possible. We were told that after forty-eight hours no trains would move, the borders between countries would be closed, and only soldiers could go on the railroad. You can imagine the terrible excitement—women fainting, in hysterics, and so on, and people running in all directions, like mad.

It seemed months, but it was really only a couple of days. Meanwhile Germany came into the war. Men were coming from everywhere, from the Bavarian mountains and all around, to answer the call. The women came with them—wives and sweethearts. Women who were going to have babies, with their families, five, six, ten, and twelve children sometimes. Such a sight! Flowers were thrown from all the windows, and everybody wanted to shake hands with the departing soldiers. They were all weeping, and the band played songs of leave-taking. The people cried and sang at the same time, and everybody embraced—

men and women—strangers—no matter who. Before the train started, they marched, arm in arm, and sang and were gay. They had their last drinks together, and then came good-bye. When the train really began to move, and they said the last good-bye, and their men were taken away, then came the agony. The band began to play, while the women screamed and hung on to the men. They called the names of their husbands and sweethearts—they ran after them and even held on to the train as it began to move off! I heard the screams of those women for days afterward—they were half insane. We could not shut out the sound from our ears. It was terrible. I shall never forget it, however old I may grow to be. They felt perhaps they would never see their men again—and many of them never did.

I didn't know how to get back to the United States. There were no German boats sailing, and even those who had money must get to Switzerland or Italy to sail. I had $10,000 in the bank and a letter of credit besides, but they were of no use. I had only 6000 marks on hand, which would not pay for all my flock. The bank would only give me 2000 marks, and what was 2000 marks then? I wanted to go to Holland, but —no train to Holland! There was no one to do anything. Like everybody else, I got more and more des-

perate. Then it was I sent a cable to my lawyer in the United States. I told him the situation and said:

"I am in despair. What shall I do?"

He gave that cable to the Associated Press, and it got into the newspapers, of course. William Jennings Bryan was then Secretary of State at Washington, so when my lawyer took matters in hand, Bryan cabled to the Consul-General in Coburg that it was his duty to help all the Americans in Germany in distress, and make arrangements for us to return to the United States. I have always kept the copy of his cable.

Then the Consul-General in Coburg telegraphed me to come immediately to him, to visé my passport and to give Mrs. Hoffman hers. He said he would make all arrangements for the ship. What a big-hearted, fine man he was! Of course, there was no train to Coburg, so I left Bayreuth and went to Berneck, a summer resort near there. I got a car somehow, and we started; but every few minutes people tried to stop the car. Then I said to the chauffeur:

"I tell you what we must do." (I had a little American flag with me—I always carried it.) "We'll stick this flag on the front of the car, and then they will let us through."

We did that, and the Germans respected the American flag. They screamed after us as we passed by:

"Oh, please, you are Americans—tell the Americans to help us. Tell the Americans we love them."

The American flag opened every gate everywhere.

We got to Coburg, and the Consul-General had rooms for us. He said, "I can do everything for you except give you money; that I can not do. I've given it all to the really poor people. How they are to get to Switzerland, God knows! All you need is the passport and the ticket for the boat, and that is arranged for. You go first to Nuremberg to get the train."

So I went to Nuremberg, and then found I was short several thousand marks. I telegraphed to the bank in Munich, asking them to lend me 5,000 marks and promised to send it back the minute I got to America. They sent me 5,000 marks and said to pay it back as I saw fit; that the war couldn't last long.

Somehow we got to Rotterdam, and there we waited for the boat to go. A boat that carried only 1,500 people, they crowded 3,000 into it, so you can imagine how we were. But we considered ourselves lucky enough to be on board and headed for America under any conditions.

Well, we got to America, and then of course we were in safety. Work started again, but I broke down that winter. I had a terrible attack of bronchitis and

went out to California to stay. I had already bought a place and built a house there, for I love California. It has always appealed to me.

Then came my first great calamity—my boy August left me in 1915, and went back to fight for Germany. At this time America had not gone into the war. I had him with me until 1915, and then he could not stand it any longer.

"I must go, Mother," he said, "and fight for the Fatherland. I can go by a Swedish boat, but I must have money."

When he said that, my heart just froze up, for I knew what it meant.

"Oh, August," I begged him, "you must not leave me! I won't give you the money—I can not let you go! No."

August had been with the Hamburg-American line until the war broke out. He would have been first officer later on, for there was no one better as a sailor than he. At this time he had a wife and two children in Germany. He was a German citizen, so when I refused to give him the money to go, he said:

"Mother! Mother! The Kaiser needs me. It is my Fatherland. I want to go."

He went down on his knees and begged me: "Mother! Mother! What are you doing? My duty is

there, and duty first, you have always told me. Now you want to keep me from that duty!"

"Oh, August," I cried, "I will lose you if you go. I will never see you again. I know it. I know it!"

But it was no use—he went, and I had to say good-bye to him.

We said good-bye at the Santa Fé station. He looked so fine standing there—his blond curly hair—big six-footer that he was! He just took me in his arms and said:

"Mother, as long as I live I will never forget what you have done for me."

"Oh, August," I said. "My boy! My boy! Come back—that is all I want—just come back to me!"

He laughed and said, "I'll come back, Mother, never fear." And then the poor fellow cried.

As he kissed me, I made the sign of the cross on his forehead—it was all I could do. He went then. He never came back.

Later I heard from his wife what he had gone through. He went over as a stoker. The English held up the boat, wakened the men out of their sleep, and spoke German to them to surprise them into answering in German. But they didn't catch my boy. I always said to him, "August, you sleep with one eye open." He was very clever. He knew all the languages,

even Chinese. He would have gone far in his profession had he lived.

Well, he got over and when he came to the border between Sweden and Denmark, the Germans arrested him as a spy.

He said: "You fools! I am a German."

You see, he was still in his stoker's suit; he hadn't the proper clothes. But luck was with him, for his wife was Danish, and she had relatives in that town, who came and got him out of the police station. He went first to see his wife and children and then into training. He went out with a fleet of submarines—some to the Mediterranean and others to London to smash everything to pieces there. From the eighty-four submarines, only four came back—my August was among the missing.

When I think what human beings can go through! You work and eat and sleep—after such a tragedy as that! Although my whole life had been nothing but sacrifices, through it all I had always my children. But when I lost those two precious sons, August and Hans—well, then, I said:

"*Lieber Gott!* What is it all about? What is it for?" What? for—yes, I lost another boy—Hans.

Hans would have gone to the war like his brother August—he was a soldier before, you know—but he

died in 1915 of typhoid pneumonia—he died in my arms, my little Hans.

Just before America went into the war I had a severe accident after a concert in St. Louis. A street car ran into my automobile, and I was thrown out and broke five of my ribs. I was laid up for six weeks. Then I went to my house in Chicago to recover. I was there on Good Friday, April 7, 1917, the day America declared war on Germany.

This changed everything in the world. Although I had been an American citizen for some years, still I was Austrian born, and what I went through during the war is not easy to describe. I was in the deepest misery because of my boy August in Germany. Every telegram, every letter, everything was cut off. I felt helpless and desolate, so I just packed up and went to California to get well again.

It was then I began to sing for the soldiers. I was at a hotel in San Diego, and the band played every night, and the crowd sang "The Star Spangled Banner." Of course, I shouted it with the rest, but I didn't know the words. Now comes along Col. Patsy O'Neil, who played a big part in my life then. He was in the 21st Infantry. He was a great enthusiast—a real Irishman, as God made them. He heard me sing "The Star

Spangled Banner" with the rest, and he wanted to meet me. Then he said to me:

"Now, look here, Schumann-Heink, I'll tell you something. You know we soldiers love music, especially singing, and I'll tell you what you can do for us. I want you to learn the real American songs, come to the barracks, and sing for my soldiers. And come to the parade grounds and sing 'The Star Spangled Banner' for the recruits. Will you?"

"Yes," I said, "I am ready to do anything," and so I sang "The Star Spangled Banner," without even knowing the words! I just sang the tune. I then went to San Francisco and sang for the soldiers there. I sang "The Star Spangled Banner" with do, re, me, fa, sol, until one day a newspaper man wrote:

"The voice of Schumann-Heink is a great inspiration when she sings 'The Star Spangled Banner,' but we would be very much obliged if she would tell us in what *language* she sings it."

Then I saw it was high time for me to learn the words—and I did, and sang it everywhere.

I could go on forever with stories of my singing for the soldiers, because everything stopped except the war work. Everybody, everywhere, was "doing their bit." I went all over California, and then I came to New York and sang on the streets and in the hospitals.

There are so many stories I would like to tell about your wonderful American boys.

But even now the war is something I can not yet talk about, so we must pass by these hard years quickly. My house in California was open to every one, from the private to the general. Everybody could come, and there was always enough to feed them well, and they could dance to the victrola, too. My house in Chicago also was open to the soldiers. And so it went, and everything stopped but the war work.

Now is perhaps the best time for me to tell you about my remaining boys, who all enlisted, with one exception, in the American army. Henry was already married. He went into the Navy. They said he had the real Prussian energy. He was the smartest. He worked himself up so that today he is a first lieutenant in the U. S. Naval Reserves. They used to call him "that damned Prussian drill-master"—but his company was the pride of the Navy.

Walter, my step-son, wanted to enlist, but they would not take him. There was something the matter with his feet. He felt so badly he went to a hospital and had them fixed, and then he was able to enlist; but he was not so active, and they put him to work in the kitchen, in a camp near Philadelphia. Everybody liked him, because he turned out to be a pretty good

cook and always had plenty of coffee and good things for the boys after drill.

In the meantime they took Ferdinand—he was drafted. He was my boy who had the cattle ranch. I settled him in Arizona because his lungs were weak. He had to leave on forty-eight hours' notice. He was in Camp Funston. He was sick and was taken to St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City. He got better and got his honorable discharge as sergeant in the 340th Field Artillery.

And now comes my baby, my only American-born child, George Washington. He was in a military school in Culver, Ind. He came home and said:

"Mother, I am only eighteen years old, so I can't enlist without your permission. But I must go. My country needs me."

"Oh, no!" I cried, "It is impossible—you are too young—much too young."

But he said: "I must enlist, Mother. I want to serve Uncle Sam. I want to go!"

He was crazy to get into the Navy, and that was funny because he had just received a medal at school for the best horsemanship. Well, he begged and begged me but I wouldn't listen. I said, "For God's sake, George, don't you leave me, too. August is in Germany, Henry and Ferdinand and Walter are

already in the war, and now you want to go—the only boy I have left. I can't let you go! No! No!"

But still he said: "I know, but I can't help it, Mother. I am going. I am American-born. I won't go back to school, and if you won't let me go, I will have to lie."

Then I said: "I will give you three days to think it over. After that, if you still want to go, all right. I won't refuse."

But it was only two days after, I received his telegram:

"Mother, I must serve my country. That is my last word."

So I took the train and rushed to Los Angeles, to meet him—and there was George at the station. I looked at him—but saw it was no use to say anything more.

"All right, George," I said. "If you have decided, then, in God's name, go quickly."

"Oh, Mother," he cried, "don't worry! Nothing will happen to me!"

So it was he enlisted in the Navy. He didn't tell that he was the son of Schumann-Heink; he was simply George Washington Schumann. He was stoker on the boat, and he worked himself up. He made

twelve trips across the ocean, and then his boat was wrecked. It went on the rocks off the coast of France. For forty-eight hours they didn't know whether their lives could be saved. The commander of the ship made all the boys write to their wives and mothers a farewell letter, for they thought then it was the end. This letter of my George, like all the letters I have from the soldiers—these letters—I say it now—I want to fill my coffin when I'm dead. They will be the softest pillow I could lie on.

That letter from my George, I know it by heart. How could it be otherwise?

"Mother Darling:

"It is so dark here the drops on this letter are not tears; it is the ocean, because the water is pouring in from everywhere. But if I go down with this boat, and you ever get this, don't cry but be proud that I could die for the greatest country on God's earth! . . . The only thing we pray for now is that we may see the sun again."

Thank God, he did see the sun again—and he is still seeing it, my George.

It was a terrible time for every one, and it was the daily hope and prayer of millions of people the world over that the end would come soon. It was eighteen months after America entered the war that the Ar-

mistice came—November 11, 1918. I fell on my knees and thanked God. It was about one o'clock when the news came, and the whole city poured itself right out on the streets. I could never tell you what it was like. No one could imagine it who was not there—shouting, hooting, yelling, such a noise! The bells rang, and the whistles and horns blew. People laughed and cried, and strangers embraced each other on the streets. The streets were filled with everything that people could throw from the windows—paper from wastebaskets, leaves from telephone books, anything, everything. It was pandemonium. They acted as if they had gone mad. It was something to remember to the end of your days, but at that moment I could not understand how people could act so.

Yes, the Armistice was signed, but there were still terrible problems before the world—getting the soldiers back to their homes, caring for the sick, etc. After the Armistice I sang in the hospitals, which were crowded to the roof with the poor sick and wounded boys. It took a long time to straighten things out, even after the fighting was over—and there was great suffering and misery all over the world. It was that winter, I think, that we had a terrible epidemic of 'flu, and thousands of the poor soldier boys dropped like flies from this awful scourge. The schools were

closed in many cities and this awful epidemic swept the country like wildfire.

There are endless stories to tell you about the soldiers right after the Armistice, because they were all very sick or in a terrible state of mind about getting back to their old life again. I am a member of the American Legion and spent most of my time singing for them. The disabled veterans of the World War—those were the ones I was trying to relieve most. I can honestly say that I think my voice has given more happiness to the soldiers, and given me more happiness in singing for them, than I ever got out of my greatest opera days, because I am a child of the people, and it always touched my heart to give to them of my best. That is why I always sing for everybody.

It was right after the Armistice that I was to sing in Kansas City. The morning of my concert comes a knock at the door, and there stood a young man with his eyes full of tears, in great excitement and distress. When he saw me, he began—

"I am a reporter. I want—"

"Yes," I interrupted him, "Yes, but I have no time to talk to you now, young man."

But he looked so terrible at that, I said right away:

"Why, what has happened to you? Are you sick?" What's the matter?"

"No, no, Mother Schumann-Heink" (that is what the soldiers call me) "but my Buddy, Captain Vernon, has just died in the hospital, and he has nobody on earth to do for him, and no money for a proper funeral. He was taken to the undertaker's, and his funeral will be in the little chapel there. I wonder—oh, I wonder, Mother Schumann-Heink, knowing your kind heart for every soldier, if you will be so good as to come with us and to sing 'Taps' at his funeral. Will you? *Will* you?"

Well, the poor fellow! He was shaking with excitement, and tears were running all over his face.

My accompanist who was in the room and heard this jumped up and said: "No, it is impossible. Madame has to sing in a concert, and to do this for you would stir up the memories of her own dead boy. She can not do it. You must not ask her."

You know, it was in Kansas City that I got the news of my August's death. But I didn't listen to her. I told that poor fellow right away:

"Yes, I will come. You can count on me. I'll come!"

The funeral was to be at ten o'clock. There was only a little bit of an old organ there, a sort of har-

monium. I was to sing "But the Lord Is Mindful of His Own," and "Taps." I brought some flowers with me, and when I got there, I found the place packed, all the men in uniform. In front of the altar was the coffin, and as I put my flowers on it, I stooped down and looked at the dead boy. You could see all the terrible pain still on his poor face. And now I tell you something that is God's truth, as I hope to have a peaceful death. I looked at his face, and I recognized it! Yes, this soldier lying there was the newspaper man who had taught me the words of "The Star Spangled Banner!" And so it was we met again.

The chaplain spoke beautifully, and then it came my time to sing. First, "The Lord Is Mindful of His Own," and at the end "Taps." Then we passed by the coffin on the way out. I was breathless, for it had all touched me so deeply, and—will you believe me?—when I stopped and looked at him for the last time, there was a smile on his dead face! You can think this imagination—hysterics—what you like. I don't care; I believe what I tell you. When I saw that smile, I bent down and kissed his face and said:

"Good-bye, son of mine! Carry my love to my own dear boy."

So life went on—after the Armistice. As I have already told you, my time was given to this work, and

my own affairs were at a standstill. I didn't do much concert work and didn't make much money. It was another break for me as well as for everybody else. I had then lived in the United States twenty years, and I not only loved the country, but had many friends among your big citizens. I will tell you a story now about one of your greatest Americans—Theodore Roosevelt, whom I had the honor of knowing and singing for when he was Governor at Albany. I also sang for him twice at the White House when he was President, and I remember that at one of my first appearances at the Metropolitan Mrs. Roosevelt sent me a box of beautiful white roses from the White House conservatories. She was always so kind and thoughtful. I went with the Arion Society from New York to sing at the White House. I was in great voice that night, I know because Roosevelt jumped up when it was over and came to me, shouting out in his well-known enthusiastic way:

"Wonderful! Wonderful!"

I almost thought he was going to embrace me!

Mrs. Roosevelt was there, and she had a white dress on and looked lovely. I kissed her hand in my old way —just as I used to for royalty. Schumann was with me, and he sat beside Mrs. Roosevelt afterward, and she talked to him. He tried so hard to make himself

understood in his bad English. She carried a beautiful bouquet that night, and he begged her for a few blossoms. She gave them to him, and he treasured them and had them framed when he went back to Germany. This was a sweet memory of the First Lady of the Land. Mrs. Roosevelt afterward gave me pictures of her sons, and we had a bond of sympathy in our children. I really loved her and admired him. He was a great American. It was always America first and foremost with Roosevelt. And I must say, the hardest thing done to him—the thing that hurt him most, was when they wouldn't allow him to go to the war. I am sure he never got over that. How could he?

I shall never forget that it was from President and Mrs. Roosevelt that the first condolences came when my Schumann died. It was New Year's night I sang in "Love's Lottery" in Washington, and although Roosevelt had just shaken hands with thousands of people, he came that night with his whole staff to the theater. He stayed from the beginning to the end of the performance. In the last act I always sang old-fashioned songs of home—"Home, Sweet Home," etc. My heart was full of homesickness for my children, and right then and there on the stage I began to cry a little. He, Roosevelt, was in the stage box, and I saw that he cried, too. Oh, I just loved him for that! He

was certainly one of the truest Americans. Through his death America lost one of her greatest sons.

I have known a number of your Presidents. I sang once for President Taft at the White House. He is a charming man. I was a guest at dinner before the concert, and he noticed that I didn't eat anything. He always liked my singing, and he wanted encores and encores—it couldn't last too long for him. After the concert he said:

"Now, at last, you must eat something. Come in here and get a good supper."

And he himself brought me a plate heaped with food, and a glass of champagne—just as the old Duke of Connaught did, years before, in London. I had a nice time with him. He presented me with a lovely pin with the American eagle on it, and a photograph inscribed:

"From the President of the United States with affectionate admiration."

Later on, at a festival in Cincinnati, President Taft was an invited guest. When he entered the theater, I stood at attention as before a king. I stood until he sat down.

The singers were all laughing at me and saying "Sit down," and pulling my dress. "Sit down, Schumann-Heink."

But I said, "No, not until the President sits down."

Nearly everybody sat down, of course, but I stood until he was seated. I never forgot my royal etiquette even in America, for the President is your king, and I should pay him the same honor. And before I started to sing, I made a deep, low bow to the box where he was seated. Then he stood up in acknowledgment—he realized what I was doing. Say what you like, it is a graceful thing to do, to acknowledge a distinguished person, be he king or president.

I met him again in a Pullman car after he became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. I was coming from Boston, and when I saw him enter the car, I stood up. Of course, nobody else noticed him. I just stood at attention until he sat down. Near me was a newspaper woman. I had not seen her, but she then spoke to me and said:

"You are Madame Schumann-Heink, are you not?"

"Yes," I answered.

Then she said: "What was your idea in standing up when Mr. Taft came in? He's no longer President—we don't have to stand now for him, you know."

"Well," I said, "I am sorry you don't do it. In the first place he *was* President of the United States, which is higher than any kaiser or king, and I still ad-

mire and respect this man for what he has been as well as for what he is."

She said, "Yes, that is fine, but I never thought about it in that way," and she was surprised, I know.

Mr. Taft recognized me then, and looked over his glasses and smiled, and I smiled back.

And I said, "God bless you, Mr. President."

Then he rose and said, "I am no longer President, Madame Schumann-Heink."

"No," I answered, "but in my heart I shall always remember you as President of the United States." He replied, most charmingly, "You embarrass me," but I saw he was touched.

Right here I think I may be allowed to say now it is a pity that more respect is not shown in America to distinguished men in the way of these small courtesies. There is always a great hullabaloo when some one is at the top of the heap, president and all such, but it always strikes a foreigner as strange that all courtesy toward such great men is so soon forgotten when they are out of the limelight.

What is Fame? Now—that is a "tall order"!

Like all people before the eager public, I am often asked to define it. Well, Anatole France, the great French writer, said that Fame was the thing that al-

lowed him to go to grand opera in his bedroom slippers and night cap, if he wanted to, with all the world to admire, and say:

"Look! There goes *Anatole France!*"

Now, I have something to match that. This is how I was greeted one day last summer by a regular old-timer (tobacco-chewing, of course) in a tumble-down hotel in a little one-horse town not even on the map.

"Say, ma'am," he said, spitting out some tobacco juice, "ain't you that big, fat, famous female singer whose face we're a seein' all the time in the newspapers?"

"Well," I answered, "I'm a big, fat female, I'm sorry to say, and I'm a singer, I'm sure of that—but about being so famous way out *here*—"

"Oh, yes," he interrupted, "yes, yer are! I know yer—know all about yer! You're the one we're always a readin' about. Why, we git our papers out here 'most every week—and thar was a pictur in the last one looks jest like yer. Oh, you're the one I mean—and no mistake! You're *her*, all right!"

Such is Fame—and the so-called "top of the tree." Well, I confess that this recognition sounded as sweet to me as the grandest compliment I've ever been handed in the past, even by a Grand Duke.

And now that we've had our laugh, we come to something very serious—the "top of the tree," which means all too soon the closing of a career, and that is a mighty difficult thing to face. I believe every one should leave off at the top, wind up in some sort of glory, if they can, while fame and fortune still have them by the hand. But, *ach!* even so, what wouldn't I give to turn back the clock to the old days of work and struggle! Why, I would run barefoot miles and miles, if I could have again the satisfaction in my heart that I had when I first sang a little song for five dollars! For I was young then and had the whole world before me. Now I face the final curtain that must soon ring down on me and my songs, as it already has done on so many of my splendid colleagues.

And this brings to my mind two fine artists that I want to tell you about—one, already dead, Enrico Caruso, among the greatest singers of his time, and the other, the well-known and beloved Marcella Sembrich, who, though retired from active musical life, is still going on as a teacher.

Marcella Sembrich! What memories that name conjures up for me! She was one of my colleagues in the early Dresden days—in fact, we lived in the same house in Dresden, she on the second floor and I on the fifth. I remember a funny story about that. It was

during my first year in Dresden—my first opera engagement. Sembrich was already a great favorite at the opera and a beautiful singer. Of course I was a novice then and a terribly green one, and Sembrich seemed the most wonderful thing in the world to me. After her performance one night, I said to Pauline Seigler, who also lived in the same house, "*Ach,* I must go and tell Sembrich right away how wonderfully she sang tonight."

But Pauline said, "What's the matter with you, Tini, you are crazy! She will turn you out if you go and disturb her now. She is too tired and excited to see anyone tonight. She doesn't want to see *you* anyway."

"Well," I said, "I don't care! I'm going to try it anyway." So, of course, as usual, I acted on the impulse and went and knocked at her door. Sure enough, immediately she called out in a brisk, clear voice, "Come in! Come in!" And in I went, all excitement and enthusiasm! But, instead of finding the beautiful Sembrich resting, pale and exhausted from her triumphs, as I had romantically pictured her, there she sat at the table with a big, heaping dish of macaroni in front of her, eating heartily!

Of course I was surprised, but even so, the sight of the macaroni didn't stop me, and I poured forth my

admiration and enthusiasm while Sembrich just went right on eating as if I wasn't there. I didn't even notice whether she was glad to see me or not—all that mattered to me was that I tell her how wonderfully she sang, etc. But I do remember as I looked at her—and that great plate of macaroni, that I said to myself, "*Ach*, I wonder if I shall ever become a great enough singer to afford macaroni like that—and whenever I want it!"

I can see it all to this day! What an impression that made on me. Well, I, too, have had my macaroni, thank God, I can now say in my old age.

It was there in Dresden that she started her really great career. She was a young woman then and had a most beautiful voice.

At that time Ernst Schuch was Czar of the whole opera because his wife, who also sang very well, was a favorite of the King of Saxony. Schuch had also become famous through conducting the first performance of Verdi's opera "Aïda," composed in honor of the Khedive of Egypt when the Suez Canal was opened, and it was the first performance of this opera in Cairo, Egypt, that Schuch conducted. Although a German, he was a perfect genius at conducting Italian music, and it was after this big performance of "Aïda" that he got his engagement at the Royal

Dresden Opera, where he became a tremendous power.

At the height of all this, along comes Sembrich with her beautiful voice. She sang and immediately had the most marvelous success you can imagine. She deserved all the applause she got, but of course trouble began at once—naturally.

She was a regular member of the Royal Opera in Dresden, and Schuch, afraid for his wife and her position, began to be jealous. Now, Frau Schuch never could sing the rôles Sembrich sang, but even so, jealousy has no boundaries, and so the trouble began. All the critics stood up for Sembrich, and Ludwig Hartman, the strictest and most merciless critic you can imagine, was first and foremost in her praise.

Now, to have Hartman for a friend could make a career. As an enemy he was terrible. He had been very good to me, as I've already told you, in my hard times, as he it was who helped me to get to Pollini and Hamburg. He became the great champion of Sembrich at once, and the most conservative people in Dresden were just as enthusiastic, because she was a wonder. She always had it "in her," as we say, and her voice was certainly beautiful. Even the students took her part, and there was a terrible to-do when

MARCELLA SEMBRICH IN THE DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT

they knew of the intrigues against her. She always packed the house when she sang—the people would even hang on the chandeliers, if necessary, to hear her!

Finally, when things became unbearable, Hartman said: "Now, your life is made miserable by your success here. It won't do. You can't go on like this."

So Sembrich decided she would leave Dresden.

Then Hartman said: "Good! That is well. And I will help you. But before you go, I want you to give a concert, and managers will come from all over to hear you. I want you to give a farewell concert, and as you are such a fine musician, and such a good pianist and violinist, too, go to Franz Reis, the publisher (also a wonderful violinist), and let him teach you something very special for this concert. Then you can appear not only as a singer, but as a pianist and a violinist as well. And it will be a sensation—I know."

Well, that marvelous woman did it, and you can imagine the effect! It was a wonderful thing to do. She gave this concert and then left Dresden. And that, I may say, ended Frau Schuch. She lost most of her prestige and popularity afterward—which showed how genuine the feeling for Sembrich was.

After this Sembrich went to Italy, and from there

to Russia, where her really great career developed. She, too, had a God-given talent that you can not teach—a coloratura voice, perfectly beautiful. And she was the most intelligent of singers. There is a story that when she went to Russia they were so wild about her that they heaped every honor upon her, and she received among other gifts a piano with the nails studded with diamonds, sapphires, and rubies.

Afterward she was a guest in the Hamburg Opera. It was then she got me by the ears, as I have already told you, and said I was the biggest fool not to study parts in French and Italian and go to America. Later on I met her here in America at the Metropolitan so we were brought together again. The rest of her career all Americans know. She was a great favorite in the opera for many years, and is now retired and giving singing lessons in New York. She is a great loss to the opera and the whole musical world.

The Metropolitan has suffered many losses in recent years, and certainly the passing of Caruso left a big hole in its ranks. His wonderful golden voice—who ever heard those tones and forgot them! He sang gloriously always, but as an *artist* he improved greatly in his later years, I think. Even so, with that voice of his nothing mattered but the *sound* of it—those beautiful full tones. And that is what people wanted to

hear. In his Italian parts he was always remarkable—it was his nature coming out. In "*Pagliacci*" particularly, he was wonderful. It was one of his greatest rôles—a tremendous, realistic performance.

He came to Munich when I was singing my Wagner rôles there. He came as guest for his Italian rôles, and had an enormous success—an ovation such as he had everywhere. A voice like Caruso's doesn't come along often in a century. I loved Caruso as everybody did—you couldn't help it. He had so many generous and lovable qualities. He was a very clever cartoonist, and used to draw the funniest pictures of people, and perfect likenesses they were, too. He loved to do this and was always at it. He would draw pictures of people on the backs of programs, old envelopes, anything handy—he even used to make them on the tablecloths in the restaurants.

I believe he could have been a successful artist if he hadn't been a singer. The gods were generous to Caruso. And he was as lavish with everything as he was with his voice, which he poured out like lava. I used to say he was the Vesuvius of the opera, which isn't such a bad comparison when you remember he was born in Naples. He gave and gave—always "full steam," as we say. Not like Jean de Reszke, for instance, that prince of singers, who always had to

CARUSO IN RIGOLETTO

economize his voice. But they were both tremendous artists—impossible to compare. Comparison, anyway, in my opinion, is absurd, because, when all is said and done, every individual, when he is a great artist, is an individual by himself and can not be compared to any other.

All this is true of Scotti, also, who is almost a household word in America, and one of the finest singing actors alive to-day. Scotti, in my opinion, is the same as when I knew him twenty-five years ago. He has preserved his voice marvelously, and he is one of the last of the so-called (and well-called), "Great School," so far as men go.

I saw him not long ago in "Tosca" as *Scarpia.* It is a master work, and his performance was something always to remember. Every step, every phrase, he sings perfectly. And how he acts! All Italians are what we call natural actors. So whatever part he takes, he always *is* that part. He works it all out—it is the perfection of detail; it goes from head to foot, to the smallest thing. He studies even the walk of the character he is singing. How different, for instance, is his walk in "Falstaff" and in "Tosca!" Yes, I tell you, Scotti is one of the real artists now before the public, and he can be such an example to all young singers.

And now, before we go any further, I want to say

ENRICO CARUSO AS CANIO IN PAGLIACCI

something about the American singing voice, which is the most beautiful you can imagine, for we mustn't forget, in speaking of the great foreign artists, that America has already produced some very fine singers. In the old days, Clara Louise Kellogg, Anna Louise Carey, Emma Abbott, Emma Thursby—all before my time. Then in the big opera days, Nordica, Eames, Mary Garden, Geraldine Farrar, Louise Homer, Olive Fremstad, a beautiful contralto, and Florence Easton, who is a good example of the thing I've been speaking about—the all-around artist.

Florence Easton has a beautiful soprano voice, and she can do anything. One day she sings *Carmen*, and the next, *Brünnhilde*, and the third day, the *Butterfly*. She is what you call a "utility singer," as I used to be in Hamburg. I think she deserves the greatest praise for all she has accomplished and stands ready to do. And it's not so easy—as I know by experience. Such an artist is invaluable in the opera.

In speaking of American singers, my heart goes out especially to Geraldine Farrar, at this time, with her beautiful voice and really dramatic talent. She was a most lovely *Elizabeth* in "Tannhäuser"—one of the best. I shall never forget her performance. Eames, too, was a wonderful *Elizabeth*—very beautiful to look at, but very cold. However, that suited

the part, and she made a great impression in that rôle. In my opinion, though, Farrar's *Elizabeth* was supreme. I can't believe in her having lost her voice. It is not necessary to lose the voice at her age. It may be tired, yes, but Farrar is a strong New England girl —as robust as I am (if she wants to be). And that is what I told her when I talked with her last. She has lost a bit of her courage maybe. The life of a prima donna is never a smooth one; but, after all, the principal thing to do is, somehow or other, no matter what happens, to *keep* your position and stand *pat!* For it is that little hole in the front (I mean the box-office), where they sell the little yellow tickets, that counts. And it counts today more than ever it did.

Farrar's leaving the Metropolitan, I think, was a tragedy, for that's where she belongs. All this talk about her going into light opera is nonsense. No, I tried that myself, you know. Dramatic singers don't belong in light opera, and Farrar is no more fitted for comic opera than I am to dance the Charleston! And I don't think even my most ardent admirers would say I could do that.

Every singer, especially a woman, needs an adviser —some one who knows about her voice and art, some one with good, cold, hard common sense. To be a great singer means far more than just having a beau-

tiful voice. One must have brains, discretion, diplomacy, and know how to steer the boat when it is ready to go on the rocks, as very often happens in an operatic career—or in any other artistic career that a woman undertakes.

When I think of those young girls who come to me, from all over the country, to have their voices tried, and who talk about a "career" as easily as you would talk about making a loaf of bread—and nothing to make a "career" with—well, I'm simply struck dumb!

Yes, I can never be too grateful to my Schumann for all that he did for me. His belief in me and his criticism—what that meant in those early days. He was merciless in his criticisms, too, and saved me from many a blunder, which reminds me of one terrible mistake I'd have made without his good advice.

I was asked to sing the *Witch* in "Hänsel and Gretel." It was in Hamburg, and Gustav Mahler, the famous conductor, sent me this rôle to study. I was petrified when I saw it! Mahler always respected me as an artist, but he didn't like me as a woman. I knew this, and thought, of course it was a mean trick of his when I got this small *Witch* rôle, because it didn't look good to me, never dreaming what a success I could make of the old *Witch*. But as soon as Schumann looked it over, he said:

"*Ach!* Why, Tini, you're a fool! Read this and begin to study it at once. You will make a big success with it, I know."

Well, he was right, as usual, and I worked it out with him, and it was one of the very best things I ever did.

"Hänsel and Gretel" is a beautiful little opera, and became a tremendous favorite as soon as it was produced. Humperdinck, the composer, taught music, and was Professor in Frankfort—and Barcelona—too. The story of "Hänsel and Gretel" is an old nursery tale which he wrote first, it seems, as a little play for the children of his sister. That was long before it became an opera. Humperdinck wrote another lovely opera, too, the "*Königskinder*" which was produced at the Metropolitan, Farrar having the leading rôle. Humperdinck came to New York at the time it was produced. I loved "Hänsel and Gretel" and I had great success in it always. I will tell you a little story about it, too.

The opera was put on at Christmas time, and I let all my children go. They were in a box, away up high, and were terribly excited, of course, to hear their mother sing. Naturally they didn't know how I was going to look, so when I came in as a *Witch,* with a long, long nose and gray hair hanging down, and

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS WITCH IN HÄNSEL AND GRETEL

a high peaked cap on my head, and dressed in dirty old rags, well, they simply didn't know me! They couldn't imagine it was their mother until they were told. Then comes the big moment in the opera when I am pushed into the burning oven. When my children saw me pushed into the flames, little Ferdinand screamed out at the top of his voice, of course:

"Oh, they're throwing my mother in the oven and burning her up!" And he began to cry, "Mother! Mother!" so that everybody looked to see where the voice came from.

Of course, I heard it, too, and wondered what on earth they'd do next.

But when I came out on the other side, which I did in a few seconds, and Ferdinand saw me alive, he screamed out again:

"Oh, there she is! There's Mother! They didn't burn her up!"—to the great relief of the audience as well as my children!

"Hänsel and Gretel" is a charming opera—I always loved it. The *Witch* became one of my favorite rôles. And that is one of the many times when Schumann saved me from a stupid mistake.

As I've already told you, I never had any really famous teachers. I studied with anybody I could find, as a young girl. Of course, God and nature endowed

me with a beautiful natural voice, and I learned to sing and perfect my art by experience and working out things for myself here and there, by constant singing and such, and not least with Schumann, who taught me so much after we were married. My poverty in those early days, and my homeliness, were a great protection to me, after all. I had not the temptations that a beautiful woman with more freedom would have had. I had to give up many things for my voice—parties, good times, friends, and all kinds of pleasure; and, although it often seemed very hard at the time, that, as a matter of fact, is what makes a great artist. Every singer must live entirely for her voice, especially in the *beginning* when she is building her career; and I think you'll find that all the really great artists have done so.

This doesn't mean too much "coddling"—no, I don't believe in that at all. Take care of yourself always, but don't overdo it. And I will say a word here and now about diet, for that is most important. Every singer varies about that of course, but as a general rule it is impossible to sing on a full stomach. Nordica was one of the very rare exceptions to this rule and always had her dinner brought to her dressing-room in the opera—an unheard-of thing to do! I could never understand how she was able to sing after

a full meal. Why, I couldn't do it, not if you stuck me with pins up and down. I wouldn't have a tone in my voice if I ate before I sang.

And there is a reason for all this. And the reason is because it takes the breath away. And, furthermore, when the food starts to digest, you become heavy, loggy, stupid. How, then, can you sing well? No, if the stomach is not in order, the brain is not in order, and you give a bad performance. Now, I am against that. During my entire season I always take great care of my diet and eat very little. I can not exaggerate the importance of this, for the foundation of all singing, the groundwork of everything, is *breath.* It is the first thing that all teachers tell their pupils, how to take and control and use the breath. That is a great subject—I can't go into it here—but everything depends on that.

When I begin to talk about the voice and all that it means, well, you must realize I can touch on only a few high spots. And one of the high spots is singing *piano—pianissimo.* It is very important not to practice too loud. Don't sing with full steam on, particularly, the highest notes—use only half the voice. The pupil must always keep something in reserve—a difficult thing in the beginning. Now, I used to shout my head off when I first began to study with dear old

Marietta von Leclaire, my first teacher, who was deaf, you will remember. One day a young singer of the town, Graz, happened to be just opposite her window during my lesson and heard me—bellowing, I suppose, from what he said. Afterward he asked Marietta:

"For heaven's sake, what young calf had you in there this morning?"

"*Ach!*" she cried, flying into a temper. "What do you mean? What's that? That was no calf—that was little Tini Roessler. She it was who was singing—and singing beautifully, too!"

"What?" he said. "You call that *singing?* Why, I thought some calf had broken away and got into your room by mistake."

Poor old Marietta was furious, of course, and you can imagine what she said to him!

Now, this can be a warning to all young singers, for if I hadn't been blessed with the strongest kind of voice and physique, and had not had good guidance later on, I'm afraid I shouldn't now be celebrating my Golden Jubilee as a singer!

I've already told you how I sang all kinds of parts in my early Hamburg days—sang, danced, recited, acted—did everything in fact, you could think of. I resented it at the time because I wanted to sing only

the great opera rôles, but I've grown wiser as I've grown older, and I know that that training has been priceless to me all my life. By being what is known as a "utility" singer, I ran the gamut; and there's hardly anything I couldn't tackle—which is again another word to those young singers who think that just singing and a lovely voice, are enough. No, indeed, that is only the *beginning*—if you would go to the "top of the tree."

I could always dance—dance anything. I have small feet and am very light on my feet—which at this stage of the game I may be permitted to say. And I always liked acting—from a child. I was a good mimic into the bargain; I could always mimic—mimic anybody. And that reminds me of something and leads me now to make a confession—late in the day. The usual time for confessions!

Now, I was a rascal on the stage. I never fought and stormed around like some prima donnas when they were mad, but took my revenge, when necessary, by *mimicking* people! Yes, I admit it! I was the "under dog" in those days—very much under—and I had to suffer. So, in my small parts, I used to imitate the prima donnas, to get even with them. You could hear whispers and little laughs all over the opera house when I did this. Well, it is not much to my

credit, but somehow I don't regret it even now!

I remember once I was singing the *Old Maid* in "Figaro." The prima donna was mad at me for something. She had done me out of a part I wanted, so I said to myself:

"Now is the moment that I get even with her! I'll mimic her in the duet we have together!"

And so I did. It was legitimate all right, and they couldn't say anything, so I started to sing and act just as she did in the duet. When she sang her part, I'd sing mine just like her, and look and act and gesticulate like her, too. I even made my face, my expression, look like hers. Well, of course, the audience caught on right away and screamed with laughter. And it must have been funny! She couldn't help herself, for there we were, side by side, singing together—exactly alike!

But after the act the trouble began! The manager rushed around to the wings in a terrible state, and cried: "Here! Here! What do you mean by that, Heink?"

"By what?" I asked, very innocently, of course.

"Ha!" he cried, shaking his fist at me, "don't you think I know you? I know very well what you're up to! Poor Mademoiselle is in hysterics and has just told me she can't sing the last act, for she is so ex-

cited and nervous. She doesn't know what you'll do to her next!"

"*Do* to her?" I said. "*Do* to her? Why, what could I *do* to her? I haven't a knife or a pistol, have I?"

"*Ach!*" he shouted. "You know very well what I mean! It's your mimicking—your acting—you—"

"But, Herr Director, if you don't want me to *act*," I said. Poor man! At that he just threw up his hands—he couldn't say anything, and rushed away. It was very bad of me, I suppose, but I just couldn't help it, for mimicking was really second nature to me anyway, and is now. It amuses me to this day. I often indulged in it, not only with one prima donna but with a good many others.

One of the most amusing times I remember was during a London season. It was the Queen's birthday. There was a great to-do, of course, and great preparations for the event. That was the first time I saw a theater decorated as it could be. Such quantities of flowers! So beautiful they were! The first row of boxes was of solid white roses, the next yellow roses, and so on, and flowers hung down from the very galleries in streamers, and some were arranged in crowns. I never saw such beauty and such lavish display. The big artists were to sing "God Save the Queen" at a gala performance at the opera. The sopranos and

contraltos came in the costumes of their favorite parts, then the tenors and basses, and back of them all the big chorus, all massed on the stage at Covent Garden Opera—a grand sight! And oh, it was funny to see them come out, because, of course, each of the great soprano prima donnas wanted to be *first!* There is always tremendous rivalry on those occasions as to who is to open the show—so to speak.

And there they all were—great artists, world favorites—Melba, Nordica, Eames, Calvé—oh! I can't remember how many more. And each one of course, wanted to be the *first* to enter! I, being only a contralto, had to stand back of the sopranos anyway, so there was no chance for me to make a grand entrance —and I didn't care anyway. It was fun enough to watch the row!

Oh, I'll never forget it—how they finally, after a terrible rumpus, walked on to the stage. Melba, with her head so high, like a queen she looked. She came first, I think. The second was Eames, and Calvé was so upset she didn't want to come on at all, because she didn't come before Nordica, who was third. In fact, I suppose they were all mad as hornets that each one couldn't lead the procession. But, of course, we singers were the only ones who knew what was going on behind the scenes. They were all smiles and bows to

the audience—sweet as honey, naturally—in spite of their breaking hearts.

Afterward, I must confess, I mimicked them—as in the old Hamburg days—at a supper with the five bachelors I told you about, to whose house I often went. I showed them just how the great prima donnas came on the stage. You can imagine how they all roared. I suppose I would have been like the rest, except that I was a contralto, and contraltos can never lead anything in the opera, even a procession!

Although I tell the story now, I am sure my old colleagues will enjoy it as much as anybody, if they happen to read this; and will think of it now as I do, that, after all, it is only human nature, and that such feelings are not confined to opera singers. "The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker" would do just the same thing if they only had the chance.

Yes, I had lots of fun out of it, and so did some of my colleagues, and I was always the head fun-maker. Plançon was one of my pets and was always egging me on. When we traveled together with the opera company, I used to tell him things half in English and half in German, and act them out for him; and he used nearly to laugh his head off. One day on the train, on one of our trips, I imitated an old colleague who had to come in as an understudy in

SCHUMANN-HEINK IN THE MEISTERSINGERS

"Carmen." Poor thing! She was near-sighted, homely as could be, and worst of all, bow-legged! So right there on the train I began to show Plançon how she sang *Carmen,* and how she trotted across the stage with her funny little bow-legs. Well, he laughed himself sick! He was to sing that night at the opera and was obliged to cancel. He couldn't speak, on his arrival, because he had laughed so much he was actually hoarse!

This fun was harmless enough, as a rule, but once my powers of imitation almost got me into serious trouble, although I was innocent that time—for once! It was at Bayreuth. I was to sing in "The Meistersingers," and was late in coming from America, and not in time for all the rehearsals. I sang at only one, and Cosima Wagner was all upset, of course, and dreadfully excited. She gave me directions and told me to do so-and-so and in such-and-such a way. Well, because I adored her, and was so anxious to do just what she wanted, I made such a good imitation of her that the whole orchestra burst out laughing. Even Hans Richter, the oldest friend of Wagner and the best conductor he ever had, even he couldn't help laughing. They all laughed, but to themselves, of course. They tried not to let Cosima see them.

Now, I only copied her because I wanted to please

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS MAGDALENA IN THE MEISTERSINGERS

her, but I am afraid I overdid it, for she was sitting in the parquet; and when she saw that I did all these things exactly as she did them, and looked like her, too, into the bargain, she was very angry, I tell you. She said:

"My dear Erda" (she always called me Erda), "I think you had better play your *Magdalena* as you are used to, and not as I told you to. Never mind me. If you will remember to go this side of the stage and so on and so forth, that is enough. Do it in your *own* way, please!"

Afterward some of the singers were indignant because she was so fussy and made them do everything exactly in her way, and one of them ventured to say to her,

"How is it, Frau Meisterin, that we can never do as we want to, and that you direct and correct *us* always, but the Heink, you leave her alone?"

Then Cosima answered: "My dear friends, now I will tell you something. It is important that you leave the Heink alone. She is an individual. She must do it her own way. It is best to let her alone and not direct or harass her, for if you cross her, well—she does something to you!"

So, you see, Cosima recognized and understood all this, the value of it as well as the danger. And my

MAGDALENA

Schumann, who tried to teach me acting, was always getting into a temper about it. That was the one thing he couldn't do for me. I had to work out the acting by myself. He would get so mad when I didn't pay attention.

"*Ach,*" he used to say, "you think you are a great artist, but you don't know what you are doing."

"Well," I'd say, "maybe I don't know what I am doing, but I *do* it just the same!"

No, I never could copy any one, so far as acting was concerned—it was instinctive with me. I had to do my parts in my own way—naturally. That is why I am not very good at rehearsals. They think I am not paying attention, but that is not so. I am working things out by myself, and I am always ready when the time comes.

Years later Schumann recognized this himself. He said: "You are a *born* actress. Do it your own way."

But I remember everything he said, just the same, and I used it when I needed it, and do to this day.

It is not to Schumann alone that I am grateful. One can learn from every one. I learned much from the wonderful conductors under whom I sang in my early days. Brahms, von Bülow, Mahler, Richter, and, later on, Richard Strauss. I have a word to say in memory of these never-to-be-forgotten men.

HANS RICHTER

Hans Richter was—above any conductor—perhaps the greatest not only of his time, but of all time. He was absolutely loyal to Bayreuth. His influence was tremendous. He was for long years in London, too, and was very popular there, and I had the great honor of singing in the last performance of "The Meistersingers" he conducted before he retired. The city of Bayreuth gave him one of the Prince's castles to live in and made him an honorary citizen. He died only a few years ago. He was the plainest, simplest man in his life you can imagine, and lived only for his work. He would have nothing to do with social life. They wanted him to come to the United States to conduct, but he wouldn't do it. I heard a funny little story about that, which sounds so much like him that I believe it must be true.

When he was invited to come to America, he said, yes, he would come, but *only* if the Atlantic Ocean were made of *Spritzka!* Now, Spritzka is a light, delicate white wine the Austrian people are very fond of. It is a very refreshing drink, especially in the summertime. Richter liked it very much, and as he didn't wish to go to the United States, he said that if only the ocean were *Spritzka* he would go—but as it was of just salt water—well, no, he couldn't! He had a great wit, and I can just imagine how he said this.

Richter was very stubborn, an absolute authority. He took great trouble with me always and did many kind things. He never had any friction with me. When I sang *Erda,* he always stopped conducting; he let me sing it to the orchestra. He was always a true friend to me and a great help. He gave me a picture of himself, taken with his hat on, and under it he wrote:

"My dear Heink: Pardon me that I keep my hat *on,* because for an artist like you one must always say 'Hats off!' "

That meant a lot to me, because Richter had no patience with *unmusical* singers—he couldn't stand them. He was like Toscanini in that—Toscanini, that greatest of geniuses, the admiration of the whole world today. He is one of the greatest Wagner conductors, too—although he is an Italian. Cosima Wagner always wanted him to come and conduct at Bayreuth. Now, that means something, more than you can imagine, for they are mighty German at Bayreuth. Toscanini was always a real champion of Wagner from the first, and did a great deal toward making the Wagner operas popular at La Scala in Milan and, in fact, throughout Italy. Toscanini is a wonder. He would make a dead stick sing. He is like old Hans von Bülow. What a musician! What an inspiration! Every-

thing is in his mind—his head—for he conducts without a score, and knows every instrument in his orchestra as does no other conductor except Strauss.

Richard Strauss is another giant of music. His compositions were a real innovation—particularly his operas "Salome" and "Electra." They made a tremendous sensation when they were first produced, and one of the most difficult things he ever wrote was his opera "Electra." Strauss was a great admirer of mine when I was singing in the Berlin Royal Opera, and he wanted me to create the rôle of *Clytemnestra* in "Electra." And this I did, but I sang *Clytemnestra* only once. The second time I refused to do it. This part is such a desperate one it nearly killed me. You know, you have to do almost everything—even commit murder on the stage! It was mighty hard for everybody concerned. Strauss rushed us to death at rehearsals, because the opera had to be made ready in such a short time.

The first performance of "Electra" was given in Dresden January 15, 1909, and Kroll, the soprano at the Dresden Opera House, was the very first *Electra.*

It was a tremendous occasion, for the whole musical world, every one was on the tiptoe of expectation. Strauss was in a frenzy of excitement and anxiety, of course, and wanted everything done exactly right. It

RICHARD STRAUSS

had to be exact and realistic, so there were even real sheep on the stage—Strauss insisted upon it. The funniest thing was that he wanted real bulls, too, and the stage director was nearly crazy at the thought.

"*Gott in Himmel!* Strauss," he cried, "are you mad? What do you think will happen if you have *real* bulls on the stage? How can you tame them properly? What will they do when the terrific music begins? And imagine the cost! And the danger! It's impossible—impossible. It can't be done!"

But Strauss still insisted.

Then the conductor said: "But it's dangerous, I tell you. When *Clytemnestra* in her bright red dress comes out, think what a stampede there will be! The bulls will jump right over into the orchestra, and all the instruments as well as the musicians will be destroyed!" (The instruments, of course, came first with the conductor!)

Well, after terrible arguments back and forth, Strauss finally had to be satisfied with the poor sheep. You know the orchestra was tremendous—for Richard Strauss can make a wonderful volume of sound with his orchestra when he gets going! I had to sing my part through all the biggest noise. Strauss would sit in the parquet to listen, and in the midst of all that din and crash, he screamed:

"Louder! Louder! Louder, I say! I still can't hear the Heink's voice!"

Well, that certainly was one of the great experiences of my life. People came from all over the world for the *première*—it was a tremendous musical event. But I sang *Clytemnestra* only once, as I told you. It was too much, even for me. Later on, when it was done in New York at Hammerstein's opera, Hammerstein wanted me for the part, but I refused. I couldn't go through it again.

The first performance of "Electra" in America was in February, 1910. Hammerstein put it on at the Manhattan Opera House in New York. The *Electra* for that performance was Marietta Mazarin, the *Clytemnestra* was Mme. Gerville-Reache. The *première* in America was as exciting as the one in Dresden. It was a great sensation always. But, thank God, I didn't have to go through with it again. It's interesting to know that this was first written as a spoken play by von Hofmannstahl, the Viennese dramatist. After that Strauss put it to music. It is based on the great Greek tragedy of "Electra" by Sophocles.

Yes, it was a great event in my life, but it is more agreeable to look back upon now than it was at the time. I did it, and I never regretted it, naturally, although it was the first time I ever sang with real ani-

mals on the stage. Bugs and worms, yes, often, but they are not so difficult to deal with—but that is another story, and a long jump back from Dresden to America.

I remember that I once sang in Arizona, in a small place near the desert, where there were very few houses. The people came from all over, and there were hundreds of automobiles parked around. We had only their headlights to see by, and there was no place to put the piano, so it had to be stuck up on barrels. There were Mexicans and Chinese and all kinds of people in the audience. It was so hot you could die, and the bugs and worms—*ach!* they were simply crawling all over us. Something got down my back, and I said to Miss Evans, my accompanist,

"Will you please, quick, take out some animal that is going down my back?"

Well, she rescued me from a huge black beetle, and then I dug down her back and pulled out of her dress such a big worm! And that was not all, either, for right in the midst of my beautiful songs you heard the cows and the calves mooing! And the steers—well, they came along, too, and looked at us over the fence. And there were the people all sitting on the ground. One man said afterward he found a rattlesnake beside him—but the snake story I won't vouch

for! The bugs I know about, because they nearly ate me alive. It was so hot you could scarcely breathe, but no matter, the people came just the same to hear a good concert, as they always do, so you can never make me believe that the American people don't like good music under all conditions. Even there in the desert I gave them just as good a program as I would in New York.

I sang Schubert's "Erl King," and then my German songs, and then the Mexicans called for "*La Paloma,*" and so it went. The people are hungry for really good music, and you always have great success when you give them the best. I always make my programs for the smallest audiences as carefully as for the biggest, and start off with the classics usually—generally a long aria. The last group is English and some popular songs, too, because in my opinion the gallery has just the same rights as the rest of the house. I want to give them all what they want. If they have listened to the classical part, and if it is too much for any of them, and they can't appreciate it, then they have the popular songs at the end to enjoy. You can in this fashion help them to understand, if they hear the best music at the same time they are hearing the popular. People pay their good money for a concert, and why shouldn't they have what they like? In an audience

SCHUMANN-HEINK AS MARY IN FLYING DUTCHMAN

of one hundred people, remember, even if they are not very musical, there are always a *few* who know and want the best, and that's why I never fail to sing some of the classics. But I have always felt that the popular songs, too, have a place on every program. And among these songs are several by American composers, that shouldn't be forgotten, because they are very beautiful. I have used them for years on my programs.

"The Rosary," for instance, by Nevin, is almost a classic in this country. It is known from Maine to the Pacific, I think, and the poem as well as the music touches every heart. It has a meaning for every one—the Cross of life—we bow our heads to the Cross—"We learn at last the Cross"—how true that is! It is your life—my life—everybody's life. "The Rosary" was my second English song, when I first began singing in concerts—that and "The Lord Is Mindful of His Own"—these two numbers stand out in my whole life of concert singing, because everybody understands and loves them.

Another little song, a simple German song by Grüber—everybody knows it—"*Stille Nacht*" (Silent Night). Oh, that is such a lovely song. It was composed by this man Grüber in a tiny village near Salzburg, where he lived. The author didn't think much of it at the time, but it got so popular that

now on Christmas Eve, everywhere in the world, they sing "*Stille Nacht.*" I sang this song, and my records went even to South America. I got letters once from the nurses in a hospital there and they told me how they put on that record on Christmas Eve and that they all cried, nurses and doctors as well as the sick ones; and they all thanked me for it. That touched me very much. Yes—these simple songs have reached the hearts of and given pleasure to thousands and thousands of people all over the country.

There is an old saying, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country," but right here in your own country I can think this minute of at least four composers—Nevin, MacDowell, Chadwick, and Frank LaForge—who have written lovely songs that are at the same time popular.

Perhaps now that we are on the subject of popular music, I can mention in this connection, Japan, which is certainly an exception to this rule, so far as I know. I had a great success in Japan. My tour there is one of the dearest memories of my career. Now, in Japan, popular, or we may say cheap songs, they don't like; but classic songs, yes, and always Wagner, Brahms, Schubert, etc. I gave five concerts in Tokio, and the royal family were all at the concerts (not the emperor or empress—they never go to a theater) but

the prince and princesses and the court ladies, yes. I was presented to the two princesses, the sisters of the emperor, and they asked me, in very good German, why I didn't speak German. I replied, "I beg your pardon, your Royal Highnesses, but I didn't know you allowed it." And then I said, "You speak German yourselves?" They answered, "Yes, we love it—and we love the Germans, too."

Then, of course, I could talk to them, and I did talk. All this, of course, was after the Armistice. They have big concerts there as the empress is very musical, in fact she adores music. She looked over the program herself, and when she saw not even one German composer, she said, "What! Not one of the classics on this program? Why, what kind of a program is this?"

My manager said, that on account of the War, etc.—

But she interrupted. "Music has nothing to do with *war!* Music should not be affected by war. So put in your classics, Brahms, Schubert, Beethoven and make it an artistic, beautiful program—or there can be no concert."

And so, of course, we were glad enough to change it, I can tell you! Yes, I had a great success with the Japanese. I sang there also in a concert for the Red

Cross. You know there is a custom that when you go into a house in Japan you must change your shoes; that is, in the houses of the royalty. But some of them are now so modernized that it is not necessary, so I kept my shoes on when I saw the princesses.

I wanted to go to Japan because I am very fond of the Japanese, and they like me, too, I am happy to say. This may surprise some people, that away out in Japan they care more for classical music than they do in some more so-called enlightened countries. But such is the fact, nevertheless. They are very appreciative of the best in music.

People often ask me about the change or growth in musical appreciation of the American audiences. That is a hard question to answer, for now we come to something! Great changes have taken place in these last few years throughout the whole world, and music, like everything else, has been affected. But I think there was just as deep an appreciation and understanding of music in the past as now. The only difference is that *more* people go to concerts now, and more people are educated to understand music, than when I first began my concert singing twenty years ago. But of the present it is impossible to speak definitely, because we are living in the very midst of a new order—making history, as they say. The whole world

has changed so quickly in these few years since the war, with kings and czars off their thrones and everything topsy-turvy, who can say what even another week will bring forth in this marvelous age.

Things are going at such a fearful rate that our lives are as jazz music! The movies, radio, and automobiles have done wonderful things for the people, particularly the farmers and those living in the small towns. But in spite of these great benefits, there is another side to the picture. Take the movies, for instance. What have they done? Everything now has to be in the big headlines—we don't stop to read anything. Most of the plays, too, are made on what is called the movie pattern. People don't want to *think* in the theater—they don't want a play of Shakespeare's—they want something like a movie or the movies themselves—something that goes quickly—like everything else. I think the movies, great blessings as they are for the country, have had a serious effect on the drama, and already this effect is felt. Headlines and captions catch the crowd, and the classics in the drama, and the serious plays I was brought up with, appeal to only a small percentage of the people at present. The Ford car—one of your great American institutions; of course, there is nothing to be said about that—it speaks for itself. Far be it from

me to say that it is not a blessing, although it still jounces you a bit too hard when you get to be my age!

But the new Ford car—just shown to the public—that's another story. It's a marvel, I hear, of everything that a car should be, and the demand is so great for it that it's impossible to fill the orders. Ford has certainly been a mighty force in American industry—and still is.

As I am airing my views now on American institutions, you can't expect me to leave out Prohibition. I think everybody believes in Prohibition, but not to the extent that they have gone in America. The saloon—all right—cut out the saloon; but why forbid people to drink a glass of beer or native wine? It is good for the stomach. It is better than ice water, anyday! If you eat a piece of roast pork or mutton with some vegetables, what is it doing to your stomach if you pour on top of all these greasy things, ice water? Beer and light wine help to digest such foods. The poor working man doesn't think this all out, of course,—all he knows is that if he has a glass of beer he will feel better. He now has an upset stomach, and an upset stomach makes a disagreeable and dissatisfied man, and a disagreeable, dissatisfied man makes a bad citizen. Am I right?

I suppose I am on dangerous ground now, and I'd

better get back to my singing; but before I do, I still have a little word to say about jazz—Jazz! Well, now I will tell you something "right off the bat" as you say here, about jazz. I can't stand it, and that's the truth! It really hurts me, it works so on my nerves. To my ears there is no music in it. It makes me breathless. It is as if you were chased by something, and you want to get a breath, and you can't —it's so continuous—it never stops. On, on, it goes and goes. *Ach!* it drives me wild! Of course this is condemning it first-hand, and I shouldn't do that entirely, for I'm not so stupid as not to understand that everybody now wants to bring something new into the world, and I know, too, that it expresses this age we are living in—is a *tone* expression of it, perhaps you'd say.

But jazz to me has no appeal. I can't see the "form" as we call it. I heard the other day some composition by one of the new composers—very modern—and of course, I didn't like it. This composer had no inspiration, no idea. He tried so hard to get some melody out —of what? Nothing. It was all so mechanical, as if he made his music with an old yardstick! I must confess all this modern stuff still means very little to me, when I think of Mozart and Beethoven and Gluck (and long years before Gluck)—Bach and

Handel. I was brought up on them. I love the great classics. Jazz would never have been possible in the days of the old masters. First of all, it wouldn't have fitted in with the times. And music, like all art, is always an expression of the age in which it is born. This generation of change and chaos is best expressed, in a way, by the thing we call jazz, which is undoubtedly another reason for its popularity—it's a part of the times; the people understand it because they are living in it. But I am old-fashioned, yes, and I love the great classics more and more as I grow older.

Think of what little material those wonderful operas were composed—Gluck's, for instance, and those by masters long years before Gluck's time. They had not all the instruments that are now used in a great orchestra, and yet their orchestration was wonderful.

But to sum it all up—all this jazz and modern music is a part of this great machine age, and no one can deny that it is a mighty power and has a tremendous influence on the life of the people, especially the young people. Jazz, wireless, and radio—they are kings today. Radio—*ach!* how wonderful! If radio would ruin every concert of mine, I still would thank heaven for the discovery of this marvelous thing, and I believe that is as much as any singer should be expected to say!

Already radio is a tremendous influence. It is changing the world. It brings us all so close together —almost too close. In a few minutes you can speak to another continent. It carries music and everything else into the humblest home, and maybe, who knows, will be the very thing that will bring back to America the home life that now seems to be on a joy ride or a toboggan slide, I don't know which! No, sir, I am not joking about *this!* It is very serious, I tell you; and by that I mean more than the home life in America. If the women would stop to realize how much lies in their hands, what power they have over the whole nation, they would never throw that power away. But they are now no longer interested in the home. Except in the small towns—and the movies and the automobiles are changing things even there, while the children are rushing to the cities as fast as they grow up—there is little *real* home life. In the cities people live in apartment houses and eat in restaurants, or run to the delicatessen and buy canned goods, cooked meats and such stuff, to warm up over an electric burner stuck in a dark hole in a closet, called a kitchenette! Why? Because women will not be bothered with housekeeping any more. All women—the servants, too (although you have no real servants in America!) are interested in everything and any-

thing except home-making. They forget that most important thing, that a nation keeps strong and right as long as there is a real home life. I tell you, with all my heart, America should look to these things. It is the happy family life that keeps the nation up, and I say it again, that depends largely upon the woman—the woman and the children she raises.

The fact is—say what you will to excuse it, about the high cost of living—*women today don't want a home*. Now, every man does want and expect a home when he marries. That is what he marries for—a home and children. Let the women look to it that a happy home life exists, for that is what keeps the nation up. And here is something else—and you needn't laugh at me—but *cooking* is one of the main contributions to a happy home. I'll bet no *man* will laugh at this (if any man ever reads it!). You may call me old-fashioned; well, if that is old-fashioned, then, thank God, I am!

Women in their proper place—the home, that is always the final solution. Woman has nothing to do with politics in my opinion, except through her husband and children. Let the husband have a happy home, find his home fire burning as it used to be, good food on his table, relaxation after his work, let the wife attend to all these things, and she then is the

greatest influence in politics that she could wish, through her men folk.

Perhaps my readers will raise a hullabaloo when they read this. They will say I am too hard on them. But I am not really, because when a woman wants anything and wants it hard enough, she can get it. So I still maintain, even admitting the high and cruel cost of living, she can make a home, if she really wants one. It is all in the hands of the woman, and of the mother —Mother with a capital M.

PART VI

VI

"It's better to laugh—than be sighing"—that's an old adage and a bit of worldly wisdom which I'm sure no one will dispute. I have always held to it—or tried to—and it's a strange coincidence that it is the literal translation of the first line of the great Drinking Song from "Lucrezia Borgia" that helped to make me famous overnight as a concert singer, when I first came to America, unknown, years and years ago, to begin my career at the Metropolitan.

Yes, I made a great hit with that song the first time I sang it, so great a hit that when I had finished it the audience not only applauded, but actually started to whistle! When I heard that, I was overcome and burst out crying in the wings, for I thought they were hissing me! But Mr. Grau, who was standing there, was clapping his hands with delight, all smiles and excitement.

"Why, Heink-e," he cried, "what's the matter with you? Dont cry! Don't you know what that whistling means? It means you've caught on—you're a success! You've made a great hit! Bravo!"

It is an interesting thing, isn't it, that after all

those years, Wm. J. Henderson, the well known critic on the *Sun,* last winter spoke in his lecture to the pupils of Frank LaFarge about this. He told them about my *Erda* and other Wagner parts, and then he said, "I remember that Schumann-Heink was to sing in a Sunday concert shortly after her début at the Metropolitan years ago. And what do you think happened? Well, to my surprise, she sang a flowery, coloratura song, the great Drinking Song from 'Lucrezia Borgia.' I never imagined she could do it. That shows what a real first class singer can do, not only sing the heavy dramatic rôles but be able to sing coloratura too and other light parts. Only the people who know how to use the voice properly can do that. Why," he said, "do you know what she did in that drinking song? She jumped two octaves down from high G, and that," he added, "is something to be able to do."

Of course I was highly flattered, but he didn't know all of the story about my first appearance as a concert singer—the whistling part, which I have just told you.

Now, I hope I shall get a few whistles of approval—at least from the men (I suppose it's more than I should expect from the girls these days!) when I tell you about a little speech I made a few weeks ago at

Smith College—a speech I've decided to make all over again—in print, too!

Important occasions, social and otherwise, are generally opened with a speech, so I shall now take advantage of this custom, for this is an important occasion for me, because now I am nearing the end of my story. So I must make good use of my time. There are a few things yet to say—a few golden memories to put before you, before I make my low, deep, and very best courtesy of farewell. So it's now or never for my speech, and here it is. It is something I feel very strongly about, not only as an opera singer (that is natural) but as a woman, and a Mother—mother with a capital M—again!

I made this speech to the girls at Smith College. It was right after my concert, when they were still applauding and calling for the usual encores. Then it was I said:

"Now, listen, children, don't be disappointed, for I'm going to *talk* to you now, not sing! I have something very important to say, and it will do you far more good than another song. I don't want to talk to your mothers or your fathers or your grandmothers —I just want to talk to you young girls. It's about cigarette smoking. Yes! cigarette smoking!

"I want you to know—you girls—that I have never

smoked in all my life—and I never will. I think and say with all my heart that it's a crime that you children are poisoning your young bodies by smoking cigarettes. Why—why do you do it?

"You have a sweetheart you want to marry some day—Yes, of course you have! And you want to be the mother of children. Now, what do you think a man feels when he gives you his first kiss and gets the smell of old stale tobacco in his nose? Do you think that he will be *pleased?* Do you? Well, I, Mother Schumann-Heink, tell you, *No,* no matter what he says—he will not! Oh, yes, you laugh, all right; but it's the truth, just the same. You take away all the beauty, the idealism, the romance. *Ach,* you spoil the whole thing! Your mouth is a rosebud—that's what it should be—not like the mouth of a man, smelling of bad cigarette smoke!

"What the men are doing is none of my business—I don't want to tackle them now, at my time of life! I am speaking to you girls as a woman, a mother; and I tell you, I beg of you, don't—don't poison the sweetest, the dearest, most precious thing on earth—the first kiss of the man you expect to marry. And right here and now, if you'll seal the bargain, I'll make you a promise. I promise you, if you stop this old rotten smoking of cigarettes, that I'll be a godmother to

every blessed first child you girls may have! Yes, I will! But if I smell cigarette smoke when I go for the ceremony—even one whiff—nothing doing! No godmother Schumann-Heink for you! *Never!* Amen!"

Well, I thought they would die laughing! But they knew I was in earnest, just the same. They were mighty surprised, too, of course, to have this wholesale criticism in public. But I said:

"Never mind, children, how I scold and criticize you. It's good for your souls. You'll thank me later on. I have been criticized all my life, by a whole army of critics from all over the world, and see how strong and husky I am! And now, in my Golden Jubilee year, I can still stand up before you all and say that I am *grateful* for the criticism I have received, just as you should be grateful to me. If not now —anyway, you will be a hundred years from now!"

Which of course brought down the house!

And this brings me back to myself—as things always bring us back to ourselves—and to the real value of criticism and the critic, particularly in the life of a singer. From whom do you hear the truth, but only from your critics? Friends will always praise you to keep the friendship and favor, and so on. They have

a thousand excuses for your faults and mischief, but the critics—*ach!* they pick out first the *faults!* If the critic doesn't like the singer, he goes to the very limit to ferret out what he can to give it to you "in the neck," as you say it here, which is very *à propos* in this connection. From the very first I always had that in mind, so that I never condemned the critics, even in the beginning when some of them were pretty hard on me. I used to cry, yes, of course, when they went for me, for one day I would be very pleased with myself and think I sang like an angel; but the next morning, after the concert, the first thing was two cents for the paper to read what the critic had said, and then, if it was bad, *ach!* how I cried! Into my breakfast coffee went the saltiest of tears! But even so, it was all for the best—for from each bad critic, the same as from the good critic, there is something to learn. So I always took two-thirds as right and left one-third for a question. And for this reason I say that the critic is absolutely necessary to the artist, and I bless today my critics.

I tell you that a singer or an actress, be they famous or possible, they must all admit, as I in my old age do, that the critics are a blessing—though sometimes in disguise! Yes, be they dumb-bells or real critics, as I have already told you—from a good critic as from a

bad—if you use your brain, you can accept two-thirds of their criticism as right.

Now, there was one great Boston critic who criticized me mercilessly in my first years here, but I will now go on my knees and thank him (and some others, too) for they put the fear of God in my heart. For some weeks I might be feeling well satisfied with myself perhaps, but "Wait," I said, "wait! Don't crow too soon! When you go to Boston, *then* see what will happen to you!" I had sleepless nights often before I sang there, and would drink six cups of coffee to keep me up and in voice—but all that feeling is gone now.

It's a wonderful thing, I may say here, now in my old age, that the American music critic cannot be bought. And I mean this not alone in money but any other way. Yes, I will give the devil his due. I must say that you cannot influence or buy the American critic. In Europe, for instance, it is somewhat different. They are influenced there because you know them or they like you personally and all that. If your work is not satisfactory, they will tell you of course, but they will maybe not be too harsh or too particular because they will say, well, poor thing, she is a friend of mine, or something like that. And they criticize perhaps a little from that angle. But, so far as I am concerned at any rate, there is no such thing as friend-

ship with the American critic. Most of the critics here I have never met in my whole life, and the few that I have met have been in these last years, after my spurs were won, as you say. In Boston, for instance, there are lots of men—I don't know whether they are men or women—critics that I have never met at all. And so it is more of a triumph and a credit if there comes to you even once in a while a good critique. No, I really don't believe that you can influence the American critic—which is a fortunate thing.

I was greatly touched, when I first came here, for the good criticisms I received. And in this connection I want to mention Henry Finck. He gave me such good advice in the very beginning. I saw him only once in my life. He is now dead, but none the less I give my tribute and thanks to his memory. He always wrote beautifully of me.

And there are so many others—Huneker, a most clever writer, but I didn't know him; Pitts Sanborn, also a brilliant writer who has always said everything helpful and generous of me; William J. Henderson and Philip Hale, about whom I have already spoken, Richard Aldrich, Lawrence Gilman and many other able critics in America, not forgetting Heinrich Chevally in Hamburg, Ferdinand Pfohl and Professor Sittard. And last, but not least, my beloved old Lud-

wig Hartman, that I have spoken about so often in the early Dresden days. So I am at peace now with them all, and it makes me happy that I conquer again at the end of my career all enemies, if I had them, and that the old-time critics are still my friends.

For we singers know only too well that a critic can, to a great extent, make or break a career, by holding the whip over us—which is all a part of the game. And we can not be too grateful for the help they give. It was a critic—the most merciless and hard-boiled but wonderful critic of his time, Ludwig Hartman, who gave me a strong helping hand in my early starving days in Dresden—the same helping hand that he gave Marcella Sembrich, as I have already told you.

But, with all his power, the critic must not forget to be merciful, and not let the *personal* note in. It takes a pretty big character to do this. And there is another thing I want to say about—and to—the critic—something, and a great thing that he can always do when the career is over. If a singer is old and can not give any more, at least let him still have respect and admiration, and most of all *memory*—for what was done in the past. Memory—that blessed word! Don't, don't forget us when we are no longer with you. Don't forget to bring up again and again

before the public those glorious names that should never die but live on as long as time, for the inspiration of all who come struggling along the same old thorny path. The long, bitter years of sacrifice one makes for a great career—to live always for one's art —that is the thing—the only thing—that stays by one to the end. Nothing should matter to an artist but that, and the memory of that should never die. This the critic, as no one else, can keep alive.

I love my children, yes; they have been the greatest power and the greatest help in all my life. They are the very roots of my life. As the old saying goes, each child has brought a new note to my voice. But I would not—no, not even for my children—give up my principles, so far as art goes. I have often thought how terrible it would be if I must decide something between my children and my art. What could I do? I could not decide—I would rather die, because, mother though I am, I could never go against my art. I have had—as all mothers will understand—little disappointments with my children. Sometimes they have hurt me, as they hurt all parents, terribly. This is not a criticism, you understand; it is only life as it is—as it must be, I suppose; but the only thing in which God never disappointed me was my art. In the greatest despair, in my starvation, in my deepest broken-heart-

edness, when I sang, art gave me the consolation that no human being, no money, no honors could ever give. When I sing, it is not to So-and-so, or for this or that. No, I sing because it means everything to me. My art—yes, with my last breath I proclaim it, I say again that my art is the one thing that has never hurt me, never disappointed me, never betrayed me.

But art need not hold one back from life, from being married, and being a mother; but a *true* concentration to art is the very greatest thing, when all is said and done, in the life of an artist. It is the very essence of life. And for this, Mr. Critic, I beg you to remember us, and keep lighted always a shining lamp on the altar of memory.

My own memory is always going back to my early Hamburg days. I think often of two particular geniuses I've already mentioned—Brahms and von Bülow. I told you that as a very young singer I sang for Brahms and of how pleased he was. I saw him for the last time when I sang some years ago in Vienna. Then he was already a very sick man—he died in 1897. One evening he met Goeriche, the famous conductor and manager then of your great Boston Symphony Orchestra, on the street, and he said:

"What! Not in evening dress? How's that?"

"No, thank Heaven!" Goeriche said. "I have no concert to conduct, so why evening dress?"

Then Brahms said, "But are you not going to hear the Heink sing tonight?"

And Goeriche answered: "Who is the Heink? I never heard of her."

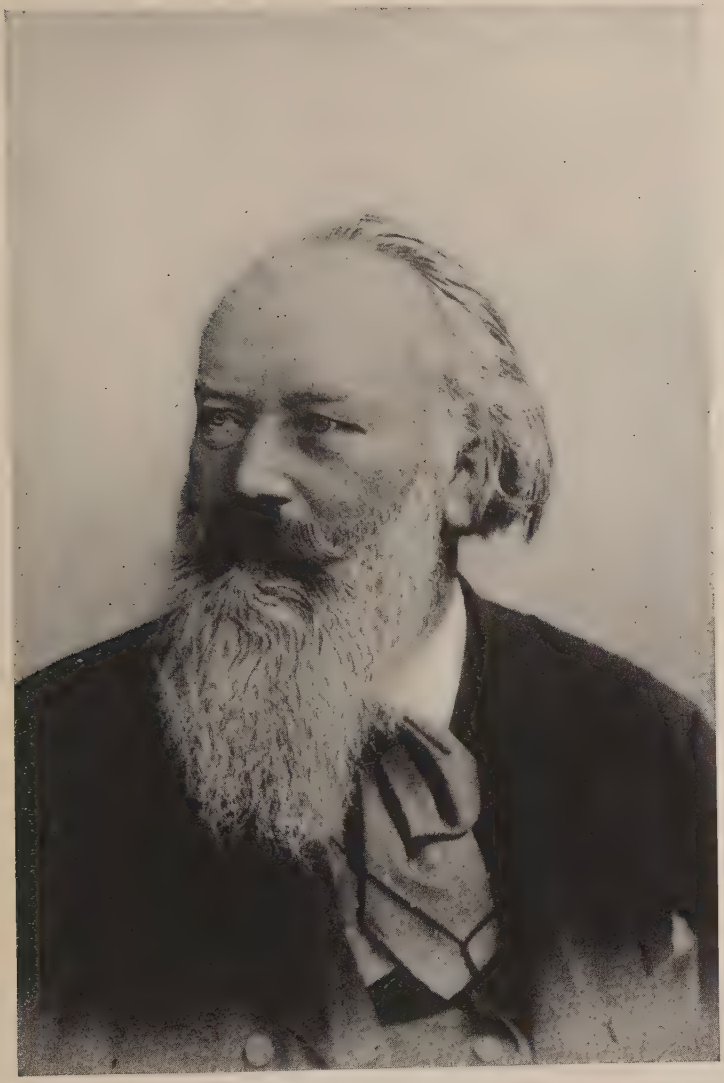
"What," Brahms exclaimed. "What! you don't know the Heink—from the Hamburg Opera? Why, she's the best singer they have there. She has the most beautiful contralto voice," and so on.

Well, I suppose Goeriche must have been interested in what Brahms said and have gone to the opera because at his house at supper afterward he said to some friends:

"Well, I have just heard an unknown singer who has a wonderful contralto voice. And real art, which is surprising in so young a singer."

Now, Brahms always liked to hear me sing *Carmen*. I never sang that in America, I'm sorry to say, but I often sang it in Hamburg; and every time Brahms came there he always telegraphed two weeks ahead and asked them to put on " 'Carmen' with the Heink." So that shows what Brahms thought about my *Carmen*. This was a real feather in my cap—and decorates it to this day.

The Brahms songs are among the most wonderful



JOHANN BRAHMS

songs ever written, classic, beautiful—and his symphonies are magnificent. But Brahms knew his limits. He was often urged to write opera, but he would never do it. But his songs—how can I express all they mean to me? I have no words for that. Some of them, I think, are even above Schubert's. I studied a great many of Brahms' songs with him, and this was one of the great experiences of my life. You will recall that in the early days I sang the Brahms "Rhapsody," which is a great alto solo with male chorus, and von Bülow conducted. This was one of my first successes. The two songs that Brahms said I sang better than anybody else, and which I worked over a great deal with him, were his "Sapphic Ode" and the "Lullaby." He said no one else so interpreted them and carried out his wishes as I did, and he begged me after he was dead to keep on singing them as often as possible, that people might still remember him.

Brahms and von Bülow were close friends, although very different in many ways. Now von Bülow was very temperate in everything, but Brahms, I must say, liked his food, and liked his claret—he was a heavy drinker. He also loved his coffee and was so particular about it that it is said he always carried his own coffee-pot and coffee with him whenever he went out to supper, and made his coffee himself, which is not such

a bad idea, when you think of the coffee you get in some houses.

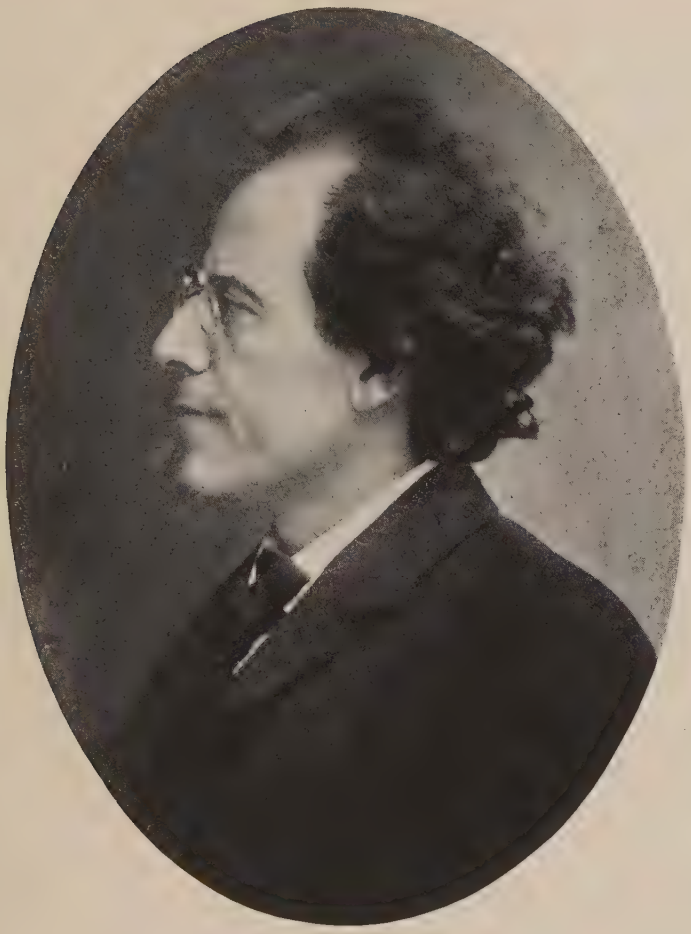
Now, I have already said a lot about Hans von Bülow, but he is often in my thoughts for he was so, so good to me in my early days. I have already told you how he used to feed me in my bitterest poverty. He was certainly a great genius and a very fine conductor, to say nothing of being a really great pianist. He was famous throughout Europe. He was a great conductor of the Wagner operas, the equal of Richter in many ways. Von Bülow was the pupil of Liszt, and, most important, too, he was the first husband of Liszt's daughter Cosima, before she ran away and married Wagner, and they had several children. That was a terrible tragedy for poor von Bülow. He never, never got over it. It is hard for me to understand why she left von Bülow even for Richard Wagner, von Bülow never forgot her. She is the kind of woman no one ever could forget, and today even in her old age she is still a mighty figure.

These great men, composers and conductors, played a tremendous part in my life in building up my career. To the end of my days it will always be in my thoughts, what a good fate it was that those early years were under the guidance of such men. No one, especially a young person, can come in contact with

such genius and not feel the influence throughout their whole life. It *makes* one's life.

It is now, in this connection, I want to say a very particular word in memory of Gustav Mahler. He was one of the men who played a big part in my career, too; and it is all the more interesting because, you see, Mahler didn't like me as a woman. Gustav Mahler was a great conductor, but he was also one of the most hated conductors. He was raised in Vienna, and was a pupil of Anton Bruckner. He was one of the greatest, most thorough musicians you can imagine, but that is all past, alas! no such musicians today. They no longer exist. But Mahler knew everything musically, and he was so anxious for absolute perfection in every detail, and so sensitive, that it was impossible for him to "get along" with people, as we say. Wherever he went there were fights and spites. But you couldn't blame him, the man was so sensitive. He wanted to be so just, so true to the masters—Beethoven, Gluck, Bach, Wagner—in his interpretations. But he often missed the very effects he longed to produce by over-anxiety.

He was the very opposite of Hans Richter. Richter, for instance, could sit there in his shirt sleeves at rehearsals and bring out of the orchestra a climax (still looking like a good, nice, family father), though,



GUSTAV MAHLER

by Jove, in his blue eyes and his conducting there was something that nothing in the world could beat! But even so, he was always quiet, easy, without any fuss or strain. This was Hans Richter.

But Mahler—poor Mahler! He was thin and nervous and sensitive, trembling to all music. It was always that he wanted and sought endlessly for perfection. He forgot that there is no perfection in this world. In his own mind and ideals, yes, but he forgot that when the orchestra was before him it was only eighty or a hundred men who were not geniuses like himself, but simply good workers. They often irritated him so terribly that he couldn't bear it; then he became a musical tyrant. And this people couldn't understand or forgive. They didn't see why he was so merciless, and so it was that he was misjudged wherever he went. It was a tragedy for him, this attitude, for deep in his heart he had charity, and he was the most lovable and kindest creature you could imagine —except when he was conducting. When the baton was in his hand, he was a despot! But he didn't bear malice. He was an idealist in every way. He enjoyed so every living thing. Why, the shining of the sun, a tree, even the smallest flower, could make ecstasy for him. But the people couldn't understand him, and so they condemned him. I tell you, loads and loads of my

success in Wagner was due to Mahler. He would sit and bang and bang on one note at rehearsals (you know how you get careless) but he would have it perfect. He always insisted on perfection from me.

In Hamburg, when I was singing there, he helped me so much, and I repeat, it was the more interesting because he didn't like me as a woman. He left Hamburg after Pollini died, and was then made the director of the Royal Opera in Vienna, and was there for years. I know today what I didn't know then, and I can never forget him. He, too, knows it now, I hope, that after all these years Schumann-Heink understands and appreciates what he did.

I want to say now a word about your great pioneer conductor, who did so much for music in this country, Theodore Thomas. One of the most remarkable things about him is that he made his career for himself, out of nothing as we say. He stood alone on his own feet—worked out his career himself without aid or encouragement in the beginning.

Thomas was born in 1835 in Essens, a province of North Germany. He studied violin as a child and at seven years even was a child wonder who played in concerts in that part of Germany. The family came to America in 1845 and he played the violin at concerts, balls, weddings, parties, anything to make

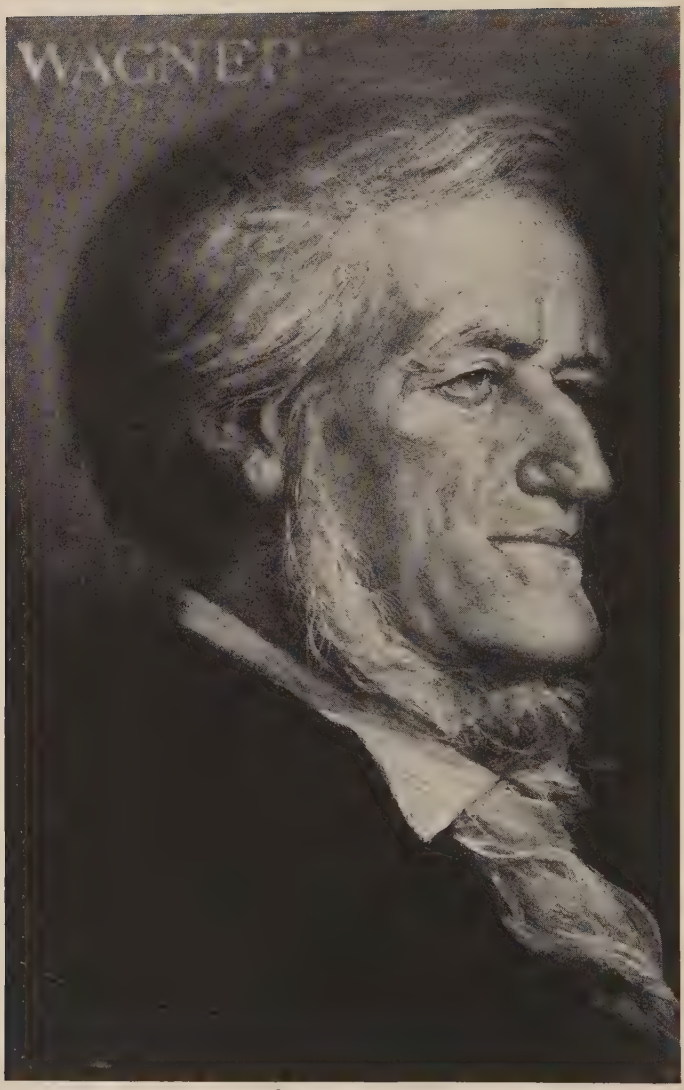
money. That was his beginning, and for many years he struggled along doing anything and everything to get ahead. He was finally made director of the Philharmonic Orchestra and so became really first conductor in the United States at that time. He knew his Wagner up and down. I never heard Wagner conducted with more temperament and fire than by this man. He was a wonder! He ought to be placed on the highest pedestal for what he accomplished. He was a real pioneer for American music. He organized the famous Cincinnati Festivals, and afterward the great Chicago Orchestra—which is still going on—a splendid orchestra.

Thomas was one of the finest musicians you can imagine. Of course he had his bitter enemies here, but we cannot go into that. It was before my time. He was a pioneer absolutely and worked endlessly. There was no other like him then in America.

After this came Dr. Leopold Damrosch, who was a great musician, from Germany, the father of Frank and Walter Damrosch. He did a great deal for music in America in those days. He was the founder and director of the Symphony and Oratorio Societies of New York, both of which are still going on. His son Walter, I now want to say, is a worthy successor. He, too, has done a great deal for the cause of music in

America and is still carrying on. In my opinion, in some ways, he knows even more than his father about music because in his father's time lots of the instruments we have today were not even in existence. I consider Walter Damrosch one of the very best of the Wagner conductors. He did great things for German opera in New York. Yes, he is a fine interpreter of Wagner. As an old and loyal Bayreuther I can speak with some authority, and I am glad to say this for Bayreuth meant so much in my career. It is a sacred epoch in my life as I believe it is to every one who was there during its great days. And that leads me, even at this late day, to speak of a subject I feel very strongly about, the taking of "Parsifal" from Bayreuth, and producing it in America.

That was always a disturbing question with musicians—those who felt it would be sacrilege to have it produced outside of Bayreuth, and those others who clamored for its production here in New York. Now, it was the wish of Wagner, as all the world knows, that "Parsifal" should never be done in a regular theater. Naturally, there is much to be said pro and con. Some say why should not the whole world hear "Parsifal"? But the fact of the matter is that "Parsifal" should never be given except as it was intended—in Bayreuth. Because there the surroundings, the atmosphere, the



RICHARD WAGNER

very place itself, are perfect for its production. Bayreuth is a little old town; way up in the mountains, more than 1500 years old. There are no street cars, no modern houses—except a few since 1914. The surroundings, the quiet, the spirit, even the air of the place add something to the production of this work. You hear Parsifal there as in a church, and it should always be produced in this style.

You know, "Parsifal" is a wonder work of the Master, but it is not the biggest nor the greatest work, to my mind. It is a kind of swan song. It is not an opera, and yet it is not exactly an oratorio; but whatever it is, it must, in my opinion, be produced in the *spirit* in which it was intended, or much of its real beauty is lost. That was the feeling and the understanding of Cosima Wagner, too. She knew well what the loss of it would mean to Bayreuth. No amount of money could ever make up for that. She cared nothing about the money end of it. It was only to keep sacred the great wish of Wagner's heart, that "Parsifal" should never be produced outside of Bayreuth. She never wanted it to come to America, but they couldn't hold it back. She begged and begged all the artists and musicians, imploring them to help her to keep "Parsifal" for Bayreuth. But you know the story —it couldn't be done.

It was brought to America and was produced here at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1903. It's a complicated case, technically, and difficult to explain in a few words. But the sum and substance of it is that the international copyright law in some way or other didn't include America, as I understand it. According to that law, it was *legally* right to produce it in America, though not in Europe at that time. It seems that in 1913, however, all copyrights on it expired and "Parsifal" was then free to the whole world. But sentiment was so strong about it and against breaking the wish of Wagner, that many people called it moral piracy to produce it outside of Bayreuth. The Wagner family brought suit in the courts here, I believe, but lost the case. Conreid was the one who produced it in America, and it was Alfred Herz who conducted the first performance. Mottl, a great Wagner conductor, was here at the time but refused to conduct it, under the circumstances. Alfred Herz conducted the performance until late years. Henry Savage, the theatrical manager, also did "Parsifal" in English the following season.

The very first performance of "Parsifal," it is interesting to know, was given by Walter Damrosch in *concert* form at the Metropolitan Opera House in

1886. This was the first performance outside of Bayreuth at that time, I understand.

Sentiment ran high. Maybe the law is right and just, but surely sentiment, too, should be considered under such circumstances, and respect for the wishes of the great dead composer.

Suppose they had kept "Parsifal" there in Bayreuth! Thousands of people would never have had the opportunity to go and listen to it—that's the other side of the question, and a big one; but even so, "Parsifal" belonged in Bayreuth, and until one hears it there it's impossible to realize what Wagner meant. The spirit there is apart from anything in this whole world—the spirit of reverence, of fidelity to this great heritage, as we have to call it. The orchestra, the chorus, the scenery, the stage direction—*ach!* when you sit there in the midst of all that, in that quiet, peaceful spot, then only can you understand what Wagner meant when he said "Parsifal" must remain in Bayreuth.

Now, what happens when you hear "Parsifal" in New York? You go to the opera house in a mad rush, you hurry in and sit down with your mind on a thousand other things. It takes at least half an hour to get quiet and even then you hardly get into the spirit of the opera; you are thinking always of what you are going to do next. And what happens when it's all

over? You rush out again into the streets, into the roar of the great city, to the noise of the street cars and the trucks and the taxis—out you must go into that jar and jam and crash—hurrying, hurrying always on to something else—yes, that's what you do here. That's the way you go out from "Parsifal" here, and it spoils it all. The great thing that Wagner realized and Cosima so wished to keep sacred, is lost here or in any great city. How could it be otherwise?

No, I have never been able to feel that "Parsifal" should have been brought here. I am still glad to say (because I am always a loyal Bayreuther) that some years ago, when they offered me a few bars to sing in it—the part called a *Voice*—offered me $500 for these few notes, I refused to do it.

"No," I said. "No, I have still too much sentiment about it. I could not so go against the wishes of Cosima Wagner, even if you gave me $5,000 for these few notes." And there are many old Bayreuthers who feel the same way. No, no, I would not do it for any money, feeling as I do, the same as I would not for any money in the whole world do anything that I considered against the ideals of my art. That comes first and foremost. I must always go back to that.

How often I think that without these great influences—Bayreuth and the great conductors of that

RICHARD WAGNER-FESTSPIELHAUS AT BAYREUTH

time—I should have had a very different life. I know it could not have been so rich and full without them. They have left an undying impression. How much I learned from these great men—and all the tradition I was so steeped in: the acting, the speech, the "style," that was ground into me from the beginning, that I took in with my very breath. What a background that was! The importance of *small things,* of being made to do anything and everything, and to do it well. Yes, I always hark back to that, because I know it is the foundation of everything. Even with a great voice there must always be a proper *foundation* of acting. Schumann, who did so much for me, realized this from the beginning and often used to say:

"Now, Tini, throw your opera aside, forget the singing, and be an *actress.*"

And this I have always done, because I was forced to make from the smallest part a great part, as I had only the small parts then to sing.

Another thing of interest in those old comic operas I did no painting, no "make-up," as you call it. I didn't depend on anything to make my effects. Nothing at all did I use except for the *Witch* in "Hänsel and Gretel." There, of course, I had to make a big nose out of putty, and a heavy make-up; but in "*Trovatore,*" for instance, my first opera, I used noth-

ing, no paint at all, and the people used to say it was a revelation. Now all opera singers use a very heavy make-up because the lights are very strong, and the opera house is generally a big auditorium, but even so, I used no "make-up" in the early days. When I came to America and sang "*Trovatore*" here, even Krehbiel, who didn't like me and who always roasted me in his paper, even he wrote a critique and said it was a revelation, and that it was the first time we saw a logical performance in this old gipsy (in "*Trovatore*"), the way Schumann-Heink *looked* and acted it.

The ability to act, and good musicianship, and just standing on your own feet musically—these are the things I really mean when I keep on talking about the *foundation* and building of a career. *Know* your parts. Don't depend even on the conductor. For me there was no conductor—he never existed, in a sense, for I always knew what I was about. A good actor can stand on a barrel, if necessary, and be a great tragedian. He can act, speak, or sing his part there, or anywhere else, and still shake up the whole audience, if he's a good actor. For instance, all those directions —don't do this and that, don't turn your back to the audience. Why not? Why not turn your back? The back can speak like any other part of the body! The

WAGNER'S GRAVE AT VILLA WAHNFRIED, BAYREUTH

back is very important. I can express as much through my back as my face. You can express everything in the way you lift your head—the way you turn your eye—the way you move your hand—if you know *how* to do it. But, *ach,* how few people know this!

To sum it all up. You must have *authority*—authority in yourself and in your art. If the groundwork is real, if you know what you want to do, you have that authority. And the audience feels that the minute you step your foot on the stage, before you have opened your mouth even—say what you like.

It is most important, too, that on your entrance, whether you are a singer or an actress, that you "get" your audience. Take them into your confidence, so to speak. In other words, respect them. I personally believe in greeting, first, the audience, then the orchestra. Most singers trained in Europe do this. First, I make my low bow—as low as I can these days, now that I am so fat—to the audience, and then I greet and bow to the conductor, and then to the orchestra. I never forget the orchestra, no sir! And you can't tell me that it doesn't have its effect. I know it does. And it's a part of the great tradition of my early days and training.

A funny little example of all this, and of how thoroughly everything was taught me in the early

days, occurred some years ago, during my Silver Jubilee in Dresden. The great Schuch, the conductor, sat in front when I again sang in "*Trovatore,*" after twenty-five years of singing all over the world. It was "*Trovatore,*" you know, that was my first opera in Dresden, where I began my career; and it was at my Silver Jubilee that I reappeared in this same opera for this gala occasion.

There Schuch sat and listened, just as he used to do in the old days. And he laughed and laughed and said:

"Why, she sings it exactly as I taught her, note by note, phrase by phrase—she even takes the breath in the very same places that she did twenty-five years ago!"

He was very pleased and interested, of course, but surprised, for he said again:

"After all these years here she comes back to us, and she sings the whole thing from beginning to end just as I taught her! There is only one difference. She *acts* now where she used to *laugh!* She has grown up, you see. When she first sang this rôle—she was really only a child—she always laughed in the big climax, when she sang the line, 'I threw my child into the flames.' " This amused Schuch very much. He said:

"Of course, there was nothing to laugh at, but the

Heink was too young to know that, and she always laughed, much to the amusement of the orchestra and sometimes, I'm afraid, of the audience!"

Well, it was a fact. I retained everything he told me and used it, as I have tried to use everything I've been taught all my life. So, you see, that thorough groundwork never deserted me and was the real foundation of any success I had afterward.

Yes, how well I remember the place Schuch spoke of, where I used to laugh every time I sang it—"I threw my child into the flames!" Now, that is nothing to laugh at, of course, but I laughed so sometimes, I had to turn my back to the audience. That was in my young and foolish days, before I married Heink and had children of my own.

This Silver Jubilee brings to mind another jubilee, or I should say, Benefit, which was a very great occasion for me for it was the first time poor Father ever heard me sing. It is a long jump back now I must take to Hamburg and my days there with Pollini; but it was to me then, and will always so remain a great night in my life, for my beloved old rough-neck father heard me sing for the very first time in opera. Mother had often heard me and had always believed in me—Father not so much so in the beginning, you remember; but he came around a little afterward.

Like all artists I was to have my Benefit performance, and so I used this great occasion to let my doubting parent hear me. I could then afford to send for my father, who was already in pension (in Graz) to come and hear me sing. Poor Father!

Well, he came for the Benefit, all fixed up in grand style with his orders and medals of course on the front of his uniform. He came in with great dignity, and the manager treated him with the greatest respect. There he sat in the front row, erect and stern. Yes, there he sat, his hands resting on his saber, his eyes just glued on me and the stage. Well, I never sang or acted better than this evening because I wanted to show my father what I could do. After the opera he came back to my dressing-room, and then I saw that his uniform was all wet with tears—he had cried during the whole performance! Of course I couldn't see that from the stage, but I saw it (and felt it, too) when he took me in his arms and kissed me. Then I said, very anxiously, of course:

"Well, Father, how did you like it? You did like it, didn't you?"

"Yes," he answered, drawing himself up very stiff and trying to look severe, "yes, of course, yes, Ernestine, it is very beautiful—the voice—very beautiful indeed. But, for God's sake, promise me one thing.

Don't shout so much! Don't sing quite so loud. Why I could hear you above the whole *Orchestra!* You will hurt your lungs and your throat surely. You might even kill yourself singing so loud as that, and then what would become of your children?"

Well, I didn't shout of course, not, at least, the way he thought, but he heard so much voice coming out of my mouth that I suppose he was surprised, and this was his way of warning me to be careful. Poor old Father, he always treated me like a child to the end.

What a time ago that seems! I see him still—My father, uniform, orders, saber, and tears, just as I see Mother as she used to sit toward the end of her life at my Villa Tini, in Dresden, under the old walnut tree, knitting—morning and night, working away, knitting. Rain or shine her hands were never idle. Why in one day she would have a stocking ready. I have still all the stockings Mother knitted for me years ago when I went to Dresden. How funny they look now! They are too short, and too rough, and too thick, but they are as good today as ever they were. Yes, they are a pathetic sight now, in these days of silk stockings for the *Masses,* but how fine they looked to me then! As fine as my first silk dress, made out of an old one of hers—a little too long in some

places and much too short in others, but my first silk dress! And how grand I felt in it when I went to Dresden for my début!

Mother and Father are gone now—both dead. Dead, but so often in my thoughts, and always in my heart. God bless them! Father died in Villach, Austria, in 1897, and Mother in 1902.

This story of my Benefit in Hamburg brings up another memory—Rubinstein and the old days—the days when five dollars to sing a song in a concert or an extra opera meant a lot to me. Yes, I got the great sum of five dollars for appearing in Rubinstein's one-act opera called "The Parrot," produced at Hamburg in my young days.

I made a great hit in it, too. I knew Rubinstein very well indeed. He was a pupil of Liszt and one of the great pianists of all time. I was a regular pet of his, I am happy to say. He used to love me to sing his songs, as he was very fond of the contralto voice. He was already half-blind at this time. He had the most remarkable personality you can imagine. When he looked at you with those deep blind eyes of his, it seemed as if he actually saw through to every part of your brain. He never *seemed* so blind (as most blind people do) when he looked at you. He was an unforgettable human being. He was one of the great pianists

ANTON RUBINSTEIN

of the world. People still talk about "how Rubinstein played!" He wrote a great deal of music also, for orchestra and piano and a number of operas. But only two of them have been done in this country, I believe—"Nero" and "The Demon," which are very beautiful in portions, but he is thought of here mostly as a pianist. His operas were produced very often in Hamburg, though, under Pollini, as Rubinstein was very popular at that time, and Pollini always had an eye to business. It was this little one-act opera of his called "The Parrot" (for which I got $5), that I made such a hit in.

I had the part of the *Nurse*—(not even a line to sing; think of it—just to act, and I an opera singer!) I wonder how many young opera singers today would be willing to *act* a tiny rôle, instead of sing—I wonder! I was a "utility" singer in those days, and had to do everything and anything that came along. No "utility" singers nowadays. They must all be prima donnas from the very start. "There's the rub!"

Well, when Pollini put this opera on at Hamburg, he told Rubinstein there was only one person who could ever make the rôle of the *Nurse* the real thing, and that, said Pollini, is "the Heink," as they called me in those days.

But Rubinstein said, "Why, she is a *singer!*"

"Yes, yes, I know," said Pollini, "but she is just as good an actress as she is a singer, remember that! And she's the only one for that rôle."

Well, I made a great hit in it evidently, because afterward Rubinstein said that he was terribly sorry that he hadn't given the *Nurse* a big song to sing, too. This opera is not known to many people, but it is a charming thing, and for my valuable services I received five dollars.

Times have changed. Five dollars doesn't look so very big nowadays. But it meant an awful lot to me then.

"The Parrot" reminds me of another important and very amusing part that I played in the beginning —*Katisha* in "The Mikado." Yes, I was one of the very first *Katishas* in that delightful little opera which was sung all over the world. Sir Arthur Sullivan, the composer, heard me and said he would just give anything if I would sing it in English. I met him afterward in London—I met him in society, as you meet people. I never sang *Katisha* in London, I am sorry to say.

Sullivan was a very fine gentleman—very brilliant and amusing. I think of him as a great artist in his line, and of its kind his music is classical. Those light operas of Gilbert and Sullivan were enormously pop-

ular for years. Sullivan wrote lovely songs that were very popular, too. "The Lost Chord," for instance. I sang that everywhere, and of course people loved it. Another proof of the fact that thousands and thousands of people like what is called "popular music." Sullivan had the gift of not only writing popular but beautiful music at the same time.

When Sullivan wrote "The Lost Chord" he was plain Arthur Sullivan. Afterward, for his distinguished services in music, a title was conferred upon him, and he became Sir Arthur. In Europe of course people are often recognized in this charming way for their contributions to art, and I must say I like it. It gives an extra flavor to life.

It was also the custom in all European cities in those days before the war, as we know, to decorate a singer with some order or make them a gift of a jewel, something valuable and beautiful to show their appreciation and interest—a jeweled link of friendship. At least, I always felt it that way. I received many such gifts, beginning away back before I became as well known as later on. It is a beautiful custom, say what you will, but I'm afraid that with the passing of crowned heads it will cease to be the fashion—at least, to the degree which it used to be in the past.

I remember so well one particularly beautiful gift

—a bracelet—that was presented to me by the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, at the yearly music festival in Schwerin in May. I was invited to the Castle to a great supper after the festival. The Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin was the father of the wife of the Crown Prince of Germany. And her mother was the famous and beautiful Grand Duchess Anastasia. She was a Russian, as you know, and hated the Germans very bitterly. She was the most beautiful creature you can imagine, but as disagreeable as she was beautiful. Her hatred of the Germans was so pronounced in every way that she used to be called quite openly, even by the market women of the town, Satan-asia, as a nickname, instead of Anastasia.

Well, to go back, I was especially honored at this fine supper party by the Grand Duke at the Castle, and was asked to sit at the big horseshoe table with all the royalty. I had sung the great *Penelope* aria from "Odysseus" by Max Bruch. I had the great honor to sit right opposite the Grand Duke himself, and he was most gracious and agreeable to me. He was very amused at the way I talked, apparently, for I didn't put on any airs, but just said what I thought and felt and he liked that—royalty always does! It's a relief, I suppose. Of course, I was flattered to notice that he watched me and listened to me, too.

But when the lobster was brought in and put in front of my place, I stopped talking, I can tell you, and I suppose I must have shown great surprise, for I had never seen a lobster before! The Grand Duke, who was watching me, saw my look, and saw me also begin my desperate struggles with a knife and fork to crack and break off a piece of that tough, hard shell. Then he leaned forward and said:

"Shall I not help a little?"

He was very much amused, and I said:

"Oh, yes, Your Highness, I really wish you would, for I'm very hungry, and I never saw such an animal as this before!"

Then he graciously and quickly passed his own plate on which the lobster had all been prepared, and said, "Now, Frau Heink, eat that, please, for it's delicious, and don't, I beg of you, ever try to eat the shell. Even you couldn't accomplish that! You have very pretty teeth, and I don't want you to spoil or break them at my table, to say nothing of ruining your beautiful voice!"

Oh, he was a very charming person, this Grand Duke. The Castle at Schwerin was one of the most beautiful places I ever saw, completely surrounded by water, with a moat. There was always a big yearly festival there in May, and it was after my first singing

that the Grand Duke presented me with this beautiful bracelet. At the second festival I was given the gold medal for art and science.

I had always great success with Grand Dukes, it seems. It was the great Duke of Connaught who, some years afterward, gave me his own good plate of schnitzel, to pacify me for taking away mine when I was summoned to talk to him at the supper at Windsor Castle. It seemed to me in those days that Grand Dukes had the most charming manners of anyone you could meet. Certainly those two men had, and so much graciousness and tact that I can never forget them.

It's a great thing to have such natural graciousness and tact. It really means a kind heart. It is necessary for people in public life and can't fail to make its mark. If it is sincere, it can accomplish anything. All artists, particularly singers and actresses, would do well to remember this, as diplomacy is a thing to reckon with in a career—tact, good manners, etc., seem so out of fashion these days. But I must say that this particular kind of graciousness I have met with from all really great men. It requires a lot of tact (which is another name for understanding) to manage people, especially prima donnas, who are so difficult—at least, that is the reputation we have!

And, speaking of tactful people— One of the most tactful men I have ever met is a well-known American, Albert Morris Bagby, whom I knew in my first years here.

Bagby was a pioneer, in a way. He began his Musicales as a series in the history of music, illustrated by the best pianists of the time. After that the thing developed into the famous Monday morning Musicales at the Waldorf, which have been going on for many years. He was the first to start the fashion of having the great opera singers, as well as other famous artists, violinists, pianists, etc., at these affairs.

Bagby was always a model of kindness and tact. I remember well the first time I sang for him. It was my first season in America and second appearance in New York, right after little George Washington was born. I made my début at the Metropolitan Opera, and my next appearance was for Bagby at a morning Musicale.

Well, he came, of course, to my hotel to talk over the program, and when the songs had all been settled, I said, anxiously, knowing that dress was *not* one of my strong points,

"Now, Mr. Bagby, I want to ask you something. It's very important. How should I dress at your morning Musicale? Tell me, please, shall I wear a *hat* or not?"

Well, I remember just how Bagby looked—to this hour! I suppose he was trying not to laugh. And he said very tactfully:

"Now, let me think a moment, Madame Schumann-Heink. Of course, all you artists are free to follow your own inclinations, but I think you may be interested to know that Madame Materna, Rosa Sucher, and Madame Katerina Klafsky, all sang *without their hats,* but Melba, Calvé, Nordica, and Eames all *wore* hats—and—"

Well, I interrupted him right then and there! I just held up my hand and said:

"Hold on! That's enough! You needn't say any more. I know what to do *now!* It seems that only the *German* singers sang *without* hats, and they say *German* women don't know how to dress! That settles it. *I'll wear a hat!* I'm not going to take any chances now. I'll come with my hat on, like all the other fashionable and beautiful ladies!"

And so I did! I wore a hat with a long, drooping feather, too, so that every time I looked up, I could just see that old feather waving and blowing, and sometimes it got in the way, I may tell you, when I took my breath in, and I had to blow it out, on the quiet, for fear I would swallow some of it! But, of course, that didn't bother me so much at the time, for

all I cared about then was that I had a *hat on my head,* and that I was doing the correct thing. No matter how I suffered—for, *ach,* I did suffer—as I hate to this day a *hat!*

So I did the correct thing for once at a concert. No, I certainly was never noticed for a beauty in those days. It was reserved for my old age to be mistaken for a very brilliant and famous singer—no less than Mary Garden herself.

A couple of years ago I was on a sleeping car, going somewhere, I don't remember where; and after I had settled myself in my compartment, Mr. Haas, my manager, who was with me, went outside on some errand. On the platform the two colored porters were having a hot and terrible argument, and right away one said to Mr. Haas:

"Say, Boss, ain't dat dar lady in dat compartment dar a *famous* singer?"

"Why, yes," Haas replied, "that's a very famous singer—that's Madame Schumann-Heink!"

"Dar!" said one porter. "What I tell you? Didn't I tell yah she was a famous singer?"

"Oh," the other porter said, "I knowed dat all the time—I knowed she was a famous singer, but *you* said she was *Mary Garden!*" Enough said!

Well, enough said. Now is perhaps the very best

time to make my exit, on a high spot with a laugh, for it's toward the exit I'm now turning my face. The story's told. You've shed a little tear or two for me, maybe and you've laughed, too, I hope. Many things are still crowding in at this moment—things I would still like to say—the woman's "last word" you know! It's a long, long trail—a long way I've come, a rough way in places, but it has been a wonderful life, all told, and I wouldn't have missed an hour of it or changed it for any other, for I've learned something, I hope, in these starving, working, bitter, and golden years. And now that I no longer look with the eager eyes of youth, I see more clearly than ever that the one point, the very mainspring of my life, has been the concentration on my art. I never looked to the right or to the left, I had simply this one great idea from the beginning—to reach the goal, to fulfill my childhood ambition—to be one of the great contraltos of the world. And, thank God! I've stuck to my point, through thick and thin, through poverty, sickness, and death, from youth to old age—and I've come at last to the top of the little tree that I planted so many, many years ago.

The value of this to young singers is my only object in telling it all over again. This shall be my parting word—know what you want to do—then do it.

Make straight for your goal, and go undefeated in spirit to the end. And that, let me tell you, requires some doing—take it from Mother Schumann-Heink—and who should know better than I?

Yes, children, see it through, and perhaps you, too, will come, as I have, to a Golden Jubilee. This is a Golden Jubilee year for me, in every sense of the word—as full of touching tributes as my heart is of gratitude. Gratitude!—that's my very last word—gratitude to the American people who have so made my American career! For it is here in America that my happiest years have been spent—it is here in America, please God, that I shall end my days—marching on, "booted and spurred," as my father used to say, like an old soldier of fortune.

For how better could one make the grand finale—and ring down the last curtain? Still marching on!

That is the great wish of my heart—to die as I've lived—in harness.

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